ELLEN RUSHFORD.

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ELLEN RUSHFORD.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ELLEN RUSHFORD.

CHAP. I.

"QUEM *creant, adorant.*" would be a very ſuitable motto, for every enthuſiaſtic devotee of faſhion; that idol whom they create and then adore, and to whoſe abſurd and even painful impoſitions they ſubmit with abject reverence, can there be a taſk more dreadful to a feeling mind, than what is called

taking leave of friends we love?—the very heart ſtrings of ſenſibility are diſtorted by the cruel ceremony,—but this painful, this diſtreſſing formality, faſhion or etiquette rigidly impoſe;—hang faſhion I am none of her ſlaves, and therefore will ſteal off, ſans ceremonie."

Such was the ſoliloquy of Harry Fitz Aubin, when about to quit Oxford, where he had reſided about three years; cultivating the ſeveral branches of liberal education, with a ſucceſs which rendered him one of the brighteſt ornaments of the univerſity. At the ſame time he poſſeſſed the happy art of rendering himſelf extremely agreeable to thoſe, who had neither abilities nor inclination to explore the receſſes of erudition and philoſophy as ſucceſsfully as himſelf. He was of an eaſy, ſprightly diſpoſition, and of courſe there were many at that ſeminary of learning, who ſincerely lamented the loſs of ſuch a companion; and ſome there alſo were whom he himſelf parted from with eſteem and regret; but theſe were not among the bon vivants of the age; with ſuch,

Fitz Aubin

Fitz Aubin could devote a few ſpare hours to conviviality; but he were in fact beſt pleaſed with enjoying, with the liberal and enlightened circle, thoſe converſations which have been properly termed, "the feaſt of reaſon and the flow of ſoul:" from theſe agreeable connexions, however he was now ſummoned by his father, who reſided in Ireland, and agreeable to his own plan he paſſed the laſt evening of his ſtay in Oxford, with a party of ſelect friends, without once intimating that the following day would be that of his final departure.

Early in the morning he took his ſolitary ſeat in the chaiſe, which attended to convey him on his journey. Some books lay by him on the cuſhion; but thoſe in the preſent turn of his mind were but dull companions. He put his head out of the chaiſe window more than once, in ſearch of ſome humble foot traveller, to whom he might offer a place in the carriage. "I wou'd not (cried he peeviſhly) give a ruſh for all the delights of Eden, if they

muſt be poſſeſſed in ſolitude; and on the other hand, even a Lapland hut might become tolerable, by having a conjugal ſoul to whom one might chat, if it were but of the depth of the ſnow, the fleetneſs of a rein deer, or the beauty of fur." At length, occupied by ſenſations not of the moſt pleaſant kind, our traveller had paſſed the firſt day of his journey, and the evening brought him to the Hotel at B——, where a good fire, and proviſions excellent in their kind, ſeemed to offer ſome conſolation for the irkſomeneſs of his ſituation, during the paſt ſix or eight hours.—

"But muſt I ſup alone," ſaid he to the lad who came to lay the cloth. "We have the paſſengers of the London coach, in the next room, ſir," replied the youth.—"Then tell them I would beg the favour of being permitted to make one at their table."—The propoſal was readily accepted by a young officer, who made one of the company, and indeed if we except a beautiful girl of about eighteen, was the moſt ſtriking figure of the whole group:

group: the reſt conſiſting of two or three of thoſe unſocial beings, who are either too wiſe, or too dull, to employ the faculty of ſpeech with ſuch of their ſpecies as they may not have happened to have ſeen before; but tho' taciturnity could not with juſtice be laid to the officer's charge, his converſation was not ſuch as to afford the relief our ſtudent had expected from ſociety. Proud of a military character which, as an enſign, he had aſſumed but a week before, this new made ſon of Mars ſufficiently demonſtrated, that he ſuppoſed the courage of a ſoldier muſt be diſplayed by bluſter and impudence; the whole of his diſcourſe was made up of frothy jeſts, and impious expletives, together with much freedom of addreſs to the young lady before mentioned, and whom he had only known as a paſſenger in the ſame vehicle with himſelf. She was evidently embarraſſed by the effrontery of his behaviour, yet deſtitute of ſpirit to reſent it; among a multitude of impertinent queſtions, he aſked her if ſhe had ever been from home before, to which, with great ſimplicity, ſhe

anſwered in the negative; he then ſwore a tremendous oath, expreſſive of the pleaſure he ſhould enjoy in being her eſcorte to the metropolis, adding, "by G— I love a pretty girl, there is ſomething vaſtly commanding in them, demmee."

"Were you really ſenſible of the power of beauty, cried Fitz Aubin, (with diſdain) you would be incapable of treating it with indelicacy or diſreſpect."

"Dammee ſir, and who are you? I ſhould be glad to know."

"No matter, ſir, I hold myſelf engaged to repel thoſe attacks of inſolence, which are often wantonly offered to beauty and innocence."

"Innocence, why who the d—l thought any thing about it; however, (lowering his voice) I ſcorn to be rude to a lady, and if I have ſaid any thing to offend, I aſk her pardon."

It

It was obſervable, that after this rebuke, our man of words ſunk into a profound ſilence, and the company dropping off one by one, he followed the example and retired to repoſe.—Fitz Aubin was now left alone with the young lady, and a quarter of an hour's converſation was ſufficient to convince him, that her heart was as guiltleſs as her face was beautiful, for ſhe was ſimplicity itſelf, and knew no more of the world than the grandmother, whom, for the firſt time ſhe had now quitted, had informed her of.—"May heaven protect thee then, in the acquiſition of this dangerous knowledge," cried Fitz Aubin, and as he uttered the friendly ejaculation, his hand which happened to reſt on hers, gave it a gentle preſſure;—ſhe bluſhed, but not with indignation,—he reddened, and would have ſealed his pardon by kiſſing the fair hand which he had juſt preſſed;—at that moment, the words, "Ellen Ruſhford," involuntarily dropped from his lips.

"And who is Ellen Ruſhford?" aſked the lovely girl, with a kind of tender earneſtneſs.

"A lady, Madam, whom your beauty brought to my recollection."

She made no anſwer, but turned her eyes penſively on the table at which they were ſitting;—the moment was an awkward one to both; it was evident, the reſpectful delicate attention of Fitz Aubin had inſpired her boſom with ſenſations of a very different kind, from thoſe which ſhe had felt towards the enſign; it was alſo certain, that her youth, beauty and ſimplicity had not ſuffered the ſenſibility of her preſent companion to ſleep;—to relieve the embarraſſment of ſuch a ſilence, "he wiſhed his affairs permitted him to go to town."

"I wiſh they did," ſaid the ſimple innocent, taking up one of the candles in order to retire; politeneſs dictated the attending her to her apartment, at the door of which he ſtop'd; took her hand;—bowed on it;—retired two ſteps;—advanced again,—"May I periſh (cried he turning precipitantly down the ſtair caſe) may I periſh fair maiden, if I cheriſh a thought in-

injurious to thy unſuſpicious innocence;—it is thou (added he, pulling out a portrait which hung at his breaſt) it is thou, Ellen Ruſhford who enobleſt every paſſion of my ſoul, I reverence the virtue of thy whole ſex in thee."

During this apoſtrophe he had been utterly unobſervant of having miſtaken the parlour door, and intruded on the privacy of an elderly gentleman, who ſat ſmoaking his pipe;—awaking at length from his reverie, he apologized for the intruſion, but in a voice which ſeemed that of urbanity itſelf, he was deſired to take a chair, "If you are not engaged, ſaid the old gentleman, I ſhall be extremely glad of your company, for to ſay the truth, I have conceived ſo high an opinion of your principles, from the ſoliloquy I juſt now heard you utter, that I ſhould much regret the not being able to form a farther acquaintance with you."—

Fitz Aubin, who at this time felt that the moſt trifling converſation would be preferable

to his own meditations, ſat down without the leaſt heſitation, and ſoon found himſelf exceſſively charmed with the ſociety of the ſtranger. He ſeemed about fifty years of age, tall and majeſtic in his perſon, polite and frank in his demeanour, ſhrewd in his remarks, and of a ſolid underſtanding. He had evidently travelled a great deal, of courſe, poſſeſſed an extenſive knowledge of mankind, and withal had ſomething ſo extremely pleaſing in his converſation, that it was impoſſible not to be delighted in his company.—They ſat chatting together till a very late hour, when, the old gentleman at parting, ſeemed to manifeſt a very particular eſteem for our traveller, "believe me, ſaid he, there is nothing ſo likely to guard the heart againſt the allurements of vicious pleaſure, as a virtuous attachment;—with ſuch a one, if I judge right, your boſom young gentleman is animated;—oh! cheriſh the generous affection; it will ennoble your ſoul, regulate your paſſions and ſweeten the cup of life; alas! (with a deep ſigh) ſuch an attachment was once the glory of my heart;—but why do I

ſay

ſay once was;—is it not yet?—yes, tho' the dear object be no more; her loved idea ſtill poſſeſſes every faculty of my mind;—ſhe, whom I once loved as the beſt of her ſex on earth, I now revere as the faireſt angel in heaven;—ſuch my Anna now is, and my former affection is elevated to celeſtial fervor; it has raiſed me far above the attractions of an idle world, and helped me to ſupport a life of various difficulties; I breathe on earth, but I live only in the elevating hope of being one day re-united to that moſt excellent of women."—Here he dropped ſome tears and was ſilent, Fitz Aubin's curioſity was intereſted to learn the particulars of a life, which ſeemed marked with ſo glowing a trait of virtuous ſenſibility; nor can we perhaps condemn the action, which afterwards prompted him to ſift ſuch intelligence from the old gentleman's ſervant, who informed him, that his maſter was one of the beſt men in the world, poſſeſſed of a large fortune in India ſtock, which was appropriated chiefly to the purpoſes of charity, and his only buſineſs was the ſelecting ſuch perſons, as ſtood really in need of his bounty.

A character ſo ſingularly noble, added to the pleaſure he had enjoyed in the gentleman's company, on the preceding evening, induced Fitz Aubin to poſtpone his own journey for an hour or two, that he might have an opportunity of requeſting his company at breakfaſt; this being readily complied with, it was pretty late in the forenoon before they parted. The eſteem of both was become mutual, Fitz Aubin would have prevailed on the ſtranger to promiſe him a viſit in Ireland, but he replied, "tho' it is extremely probable, that I ſhall be in that kingdom ſome time hence, yet I cannot accede to this requeſt, as the buſineſs I ſhall go on will not admit me to conſult my own pleaſure; however, if we ſhould ever meet again, it will be with ſincere ſatisfaction on my part, and if we ſhould not, this ring will ſerve to remind you, of a perſon who has conceived that opinion of your principles, as leads him to aſſign you a very eminent place in his eſteem and remembrance."

Here the old gentleman took a brilliant ring

ring from his finger, and preſented it to Fitz-Aubin, who receiving it, ſaid, "ſuch a teſtimony of regard from one of your character, ſir, will be a ſtimulative to every noble ſentiment; as ſuch a memento, I receive and will preſerve it; but by what name may I hereafter inquire the generous donor."

"My name, returned the ſtranger, is *Henderſon*."

"It will be written on my memory, ſaid Fitz Aubin, for never while I exiſt, can I forget a perſon who has ſo warmly intereſted my affection."

And yet, reſumed the old gentleman with a ſmile, there is a kind of wiſdom which would reprove ſo haſty an attachment, and warn you to beware of indulging ſo favourable a ſentiment, till warranted by a more competent knowledge of the object; but for my part, I am no friend to that frigid caution which compreſſes the ſocial affections, why ſhould man

be

be ſo ſtrange to man, and regard a fellow creature with the ſame ſenſation as he would a beaſt of the foreſt; 'tis true, there have been inſtances which appear to authorize the reſerve; but for my part, I would rather loſe my purſe, than that my heart ſhould be for ever cloſe locked up, like a pagod in a nitch."

At length, Fitz Aubin reluctantly tore himſelf from the amiable ſtranger, and with the word *Henderſon*, deeply engraven on his heart, purſued his way to Liverpool, where finding a packet ready to ſail, he embarked and ſoon reached Ireland, his native country.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

HENRY Fitz Aubin was deſcended from one of the moſt reſpectable families in Ireland, not on the ſcore of wealth is this diſtinction founded, but on that of virtue. The Fitz Aubins certainly were not rich; ſome account of the family however ſhall be here ſubjoined, in order to explain its real ſituation. The great grandfather of our hero had a heart glowing with the pureſt love of liberty, in its beſt and moſt exalted ſenſe, and therefore hefitated not a moment to join thoſe illuſtrious patriots, who made ſo noble a ſtand againſt the

the unconſtitutional innovations of the Stuarts, at the battle of the Boyne, in which the hopes of the Jacobites were totally defeated. He ſerved in the rank of Colonel under King William, ſoon after which, he gave up his commiſſion and retired to his paternal eſtate, to paſs the remainder of his days in tranquillity. His fortune had materially ſuffered by his adherence to the cauſe of liberty, and he was ſtrenuouſly adviſed by his friends to go to England, that it might be repaired, by the generoſity of the royal pair; on which occaſion he is ſaid to have replied, "No, let thoſe who make a market of their principles, have recourſe to the mean arts of a courtier; my ſervices were devoted to my country, and I am paid by the eſtabliſhment of its liberties. If my ſword have happily been inſtrumental, in placing a virtuous prince at the head of an oppreſſed nation, the reflection is to me a more ample reward than any riches the noble William could beſtow." With this generous reſolution he retired to the country, where his eſtate (now indeed a ſmall one) was ſituated,

ted, and enjoyed the ſweet retroſpect of an honeſt and patriotic zeal.

Mr. Fitz Aubin the preſent poſſeſſor was a man of a very different temper, from his illuſtrious progenitor, and was ſcarcely in poſſeſſion of his patrimony, before he diſcovered it to be very inadequate to the views of life which he had formed. Giving the reins to an unbridled imagination, he launched into many airy ſchemes of augmenting his fortune, but had at length the mortification to find, that they all ultimately tended to the diminution, rather than the increaſe of it. His wife, a lady of ſingular merit, endeavoured by that fine underſtanding and ſweetneſs of temper, for which ſhe was remarkable, to fix the eccentric temper of her huſband to the calm point of domeſtic happineſs, but in vain: he purſued his mode of ſpeculation and project, till there were alarming reaſons to fear he would reduce his family to penury. Under theſe terrifying apprehenſions ſhe had no remedy, but to oppoſe the moſt rigid œconomy to his ridiculous

lous diſſipation, and accordingly applied herſelf to domeſtic concerns, with a diligence which promiſed ſome remedy for the growing evil. She had been ever accuſtomed to move in that polite ſphere, which her birth and accompliſhments entitled her to; but now with the moſt laudable reſolution, this excellent woman confined herſelf entirely to her country ſeat, and bade a final adieu to the gay world. Her little family, conſiſting of three ſons and a daughter, formed her chief pleaſure, as the uncommon attention ſhe paid to their education, afforded her a ſolace, under many a heavy hour, which ſhe was obliged to paſs without the company of her huſband, who wanted both reſolution and prudence to imitate her example. With the aſſiſtance of an elderly divine, reſident in the neighbourhood, even the young gentlemen, her ſons, received a liberal and claſſical education, without the expence of a public ſchool. Too ſoon however, for the intereſt of her family, ſhe was removed to a better world; her death ſeemed at firſt to have awakened ſomething like reflection

flection in the breaſt of Mr. Fitz Aubin; but the effect was tranſient; he ſoon forgot the merits of his deceaſed lady, and choſe for her ſucceſſor her waiting woman; a perſon many years younger than himſelf, and who poſſeſſed all the vanity, levity and arrogance generally incident to that character.

At the time when Mr. Fitz Aubin ſo far degraded himſelf and family as to marry this woman, his eldeſt ſon was nearly of age, and ſoon after was ſent to the univerſity of Oxford; Henrietta, the daughter, was within a year and half of being as old as her ſtep-mother; and both in perſonal and mental perfections, was the living image of her deceaſed parent: conſequently might be ſuppoſed to feel the impropriety of her father's conduct more ſenſibly than either of her brothers, the two younger, Charles and William, not being more than fourteen.

Harry Fitz Aubin, on his return to Ireland, was received with great cordiality by his father,

father, who valued himſelf much on poſſeſſing ſo promiſing an heir of his family honours. A three years abſence had not abated that affection, which had a principal ſhare of vanity for its baſis, and that period having alſo beſtowed on the young gentleman, many ſtriking improvements, both of perſon and manners, the paternal ſatisfaction was rendered complete.

One of the firſt principles inſtilled into the minds of theſe young people by their amiable mother was, that of love and family harmony. Henry and his ſiſter being the two oldeſt, entertained a very ardent tenderneſs for each other, and now met with that tranſport of affection, which might be expected from perſons of equal fondneſs and ſenſibility; Henrietta had moreover, an additional motive to rejoice in the preſence of her beloved brother; ſhe had many little ſecrets to depoſite in his friendly boſom, among the reſt, the frequent painful ſenſations ſhe experienced from the behaviour of her ſtep-mother, made an unpleaſing part. Mrs. Fitz Aubin

Fitz Aubin, both ignorant and imperious, had never regarded this young lady with a very friendly eye; and perhaps was not deſtitute of thoſe emotions, which weak and vulgar minds generally feel, at the conſciouſneſs of another's ſuperiority of character; but ſhe had now added two children, a ſon and daughter, to a family already too numerous for the patrimonial inheritance, and of courſe looked on all Mr. Fitz Aubin's children by his former wife, as ſo many rivals to the intereſt of her own offspring: hence deep rooted jealouſy continually diſplayed itſelf in caprice, tyranny, and ill nature.

"Oh my dear Harry (ſaid Miſs Fitz Aubin to her brother,) how are we obliged to lament this unhappy impropriety in our father's conduct."

This obſervation was uttered with that confidential freedom, which expects a ſympathetic auditor; but ſhe was miſtaken; Fitz-Aubin, with a look rather ſevere replied,

"Let

"Let us not condemn the improprieties of others ſiſter, while we betray ſuch ourſelves."

"Surely I do not comprehend this;—I hope and believe my conduct has——"

"Been irreproachable, my deareſt ſiſter, except when you preſume to judge harſhly of a parent's conduct."

"What then, you really approve this bleſſed marriage?"

"Perhaps I wiſh it had not taken place for my Henrietta's ſake, and for all our ſakes; but then are we to be ſo abſorpt in ſelfiſh conſiderations, as to deſire to take from another, particularly from a parent, the right of ſelf-pleaſing: our father had ſurely a right to pleaſe himſelf, my dear ſiſter."

"I am not quite clear as to the nature of that right, Harry; are there no ſuch things as ſocial obligations? if you allow this, it follows,

I think, that a parent is bound to regard the welfare and happineſs of his children."

"I do not deny it; but moral virtue, ſiſter, is of eternal obligation; and therefore, if one man faiis of diſcharging what he owes me, I am not releaſed from the rule of juſtice to others."

"I underſtand the inference, if our father have not properly attended to our advantage, we are ſtill to reſpect the paternal character; is not this what you mean?"

"I need not ſay it is, for I will believe that it is no leſs my Henrietta's ſentiment than my own; ſhe cannot ſo ſoon have forgotten the beſt of mothers and of women."

"Forgotten her, oh heavens!" burſting into tears."

"You have not my dear ſiſter, (weeping as he folded her in his arms) let then her illuſ-

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trious example animate us, to the practice of her virtues; we were both old enough to be assured, that no unkindness or provocation whatever, could induce that dear saint to swerve one moment from the patient tender assiduities of a virtuous wife; cannot we attempt at least to imitate her?"

"Oh! my brother, how necessary to me was your presence, for indeed, indeed, my equanimity of temper, and perhaps my duty also, were nearly annihilated by repeated trials;—but can you forgive this sally of a disposition, which has too much of impatience in it."

"Say no more of it my sweet sister, henceforth be we each other's monitor in the path of virtue; and believe, there cannot be a sorrow reach that worthy heart, but your Henry is a sharer in it."

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE preceding account of Mr. Fitz Aubin's family cannot be ſaid to be complete, till mention has been made of a young lady, who, tho' no relation, had for many years made a part of it.

Ellen Ruſhford had been bred up from infancy in the houſe of that gentleman, and, knowing no other parent, had ever regarded him and his lady in that endearing light; ſhe was nearly of the ſame age with Henrietta, and about two years younger than Henry Fitz Aubin. Having in every reſpect been treated

as a child of the family, the affection ſubſiſting between theſe three young perſons, was of the moſt tender and lively kind; the intimacy between the two ladies was ſuch, as would juſtify the ſtrong poetical metaphor,

"That but one ſoul in the two bodies reigned,"

an union which rendered their lives mutually delightful, and more than counterbalanced every unpleaſant reflection, which might occaſionally intrude itſelf into the breaſt of either. The attachment of Miſs Ruſhford and the brother of her friend, was not leſs ſincere, delicate or frank; but to the real affection of brother and ſiſter, they added a ſentiment, which might very naturally be ſuppoſed to have ariſen, in the hearts of two young perſons of different ſexes, bred up together, and encouraged in every teſtimony of tenderneſs for each other: for the former, Mrs. Fitz Aubin was ſo far from diſcerning any thing reprehenſible, in an union of her ſon with the fair orphan, that ſhe really experienced a lively

ſatisfaction, in the probable view of ſuch an event; ſo entirely ſatisfied was ſhe, of the amiable caſt of Ellen's ſoul, as to believe, that the happineſs of her beloved Henry, could not receive ſo full a completion, as by an alliance with ſo illuſtrious a compoſition of every female excellence.

Elegance of form and delicate ſymmetry of features, were very early characteriſtics of Miſs Ruſhford's perſon; but when after a three years abſence, Fitz Aubin beheld the object of his earlieſt attachment, he thought her ſo finiſhed a beauty, as really to believe, neither Ireland nor England, could produce ſo fine a model of perfection: much doubtleſs is to be allowed, for the magnifying optics of an enamoured lover, nevertheleſs, impartiality itſelf, would have ſubſcribed to the opinion, that Ellen Ruſhford was a very charming woman; but what in the eſtimation of cool reaſon is of more importance, her mind was really as lovely as her perſon. Whatever her expectations in life might naturally have been,

fortune had ſo contrived, that nothing could reſult from thence, to raiſe that pride and vanity, which ſometimes creep into wiſer heads than female ones, when birth, honours or affluence give a decided pre-eminence. The young lady was an orphan, nurtured by the charity and benevolence of Mrs. Fitz Aubin, and therefore, the rich ſeeds of virtue, which nature had planted in her ſoul, were never burnt up, as ſometimes is the caſe, by the ſun-ſhine of proſperity or adulation; ſhe was modeſt, candid, generous, and in ſhort whatever elſe an enamoured quixote can ſuppoſe, when finiſhing his idea of his dulcinea.

But what is all this crys the reader to her ſtory; well then, the ſtory of Miſs Ruſhford ſhall here be given, for on mature deliberation it ſeems in no wiſe mal-a-propos.

Mrs. Fitz Aubin, of whom honourable mention has been already made, was one day walking near the ſea ſhore, at ſome little diſtance from where her manſion ſtood, when ſhe perceived

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at ſome leagues diſtance, a veſſel in diſtreſs, having ſprung a leak by ſtriking againſt the angle of a rock; the crew were making their eſcape from ſo imminent a danger, by means of the long boat; a fiſherman had alſo put off, to the relief of the ſufferers, and was now making towards the ſhore with two unfortunate perſons, a middle aged gentlewoman and a female child. Mrs. Fitz Aubin was a woman of the fineſt feelings; the miſeries of others, the benignity of her nature, ever made her own: it may therefore be ſuperfluous to add, that the ſufferers were immediately conveyed to the Caſtle, and treated with every attention which their ſituation ſtood in need of. The poor lady was ſo much exhauſted by the perils ſhe had lately ſuſtained, as to be incapable of giving any account of herſelf for a little time, during which, the child, apparently about two years old, was carefully conſigned to the care of Henrietta's nurſe, and already recognized by the children as a ſiſter; apprehenſions were indeed at firſt entertained for the life of its mother; but by the tender aſſi-

duities of her kind benefactreſs, ſhe at length recovered ſufficiently, to be able to give the following relation of herſelf.

"My name (ſaid ſhe) is Caroline Ruſhford, the mother of this dear babe, and wife of a gentleman now in the Eaſt Indies, whither I was alſo bound, when detained by the late unfortunate accident; but my ſtory is ſo replete with ſorrow, that in order to acquaint you dear Madam with the nature of it, I muſt go back to the earlieſt part of my life."

"My father was poſſeſſed of a large fortune, and had no child but myſelf, conſequently, nothing was omitted, which could render me by education, an honour to his name, as in the exceſs of tenderneſs, he was pleaſed to expreſs himſelf. My mother concurred in the ſame meaſures, tho' from a different motive; her ambition, being only to have me excel other young women of my rank, in external accompliſhments: for ſhe was gay, vain and fond of expence."

"When

"When I was about ſixteen years of age, an old friend of my father's made him a viſit, accompanied by his ſon, a moſt amiable youth of nineteen; the viſit continued the greater part of the ſummer, during which, ſome ſentiments of a very tender kind, were mutually excited in the heart of Edward Ruſhford and myſelf; our parents were not ignorant of the attachment which had taken place between us; they perceived it with pleaſure; there was an equality in point of fortune, and the long intimacy ſubſiſting between the families, rendered ſuch an union, an eligible and deſirable circumſtance: however, as we were both too young to enter into the marriage ſtate, we parted with mutual aſſurances of fidelity. With the conſent of my mother, I agreed to receive and anſwer the letters of my lover, and from that time, an epiſtolary correſpondence commenced between us, from which I confeſs I received a very delicate pleaſure."

In the courſe of three years, which elapſed from this period, we ſaw each other frequent-

ly, and conſtantly, I believe, with new acquiſitions of love and eſteem. The perſon of Edward Ruſhford was extremely pleaſing, but there was a grace and ſweetneſs in his manner, infinitely more attractive than the higheſt perſonal accompliſhments; add to this, the many proofs I had witneſſed, of a mind perfectly generous and noble."

"The requiſite preliminaries were at length ſettled, by our reſpective parents, and a day fixed for the celebration of our nuptials. About a week before its approach, my father was ſeized with a fever, which, in ſpite of all medical art, terminated his valuable life; and by a will, made ſeveral years before that fatal event, the whole of his fortune was left at the diſpoſal of my mother, whoſe prudence, or tenderneſs to myſelf, he certainly was far from ſuſpecting; the circumſtance however was of moſt unhappy conſequence to me, for ſcarcely were the funeral obſequies of that dear parent performed, when my mother acquainted the elder Mr. Ruſhford, that he was not to expect his ſon ſhould

receive

receive with me, the fortune which had been ſtipulated by my father, for that ſhe would part with nothing during her life time, and conſequently, if I were received into that family, it muſt be totally portionleſs. Mr. Ruſhford was not a man tamely to acquieſce with ſuch a declaration; he loved money, and the eagerneſs with which he had promoted the propoſed alliance, was inſtigated, more by pecuniary views, than any other conſideration. He at firſt warmly remonſtrated on the injuſtice of ſuch a proceeding, but finding my mother immoveable, he finally commanded his ſon to break off the match, and to avoid all farther intercourſe with our family. Edward, however, immediately flew to me, and on his knees entreated, that the capricious conduct of our parents, might make no alteration in my ſentiments reſpecting him, or prevent an union, on which the happineſs of his life depended; tenderly as I loved him, prudence reſtrained me from promiſing any thing, which appeared contrary to my duty, or our mutual intereſts, and we took at laſt a ſorrowful leave

of each other, determining to wait with conſtancy the event of time."

"My mother, now began to give full ſcope to her taſte, for diſſipated pleaſures; ſhe quitted her ſeat in Devon; hired an elegant houſe in one of the ſquares in London, and took me with her to that metropolis, where ſhe gave into all the amuſements and expenſive follies of the age; a variety of new engagements and purſuits perpetually occupied her mind, till at length, I had the mortification to perceive, every ſentiment of maternal tenderneſs, gradually effaced by levity: cards, company and public amuſements, were her delight, and, as my humour inclined more to retirement, I had ſeldom the happineſs of ſeeing her, except a run of ill luck, or ſome mortification of her pride, had put her out of humour, when ſhe generally came into my apartment, to vent her ſpleen, or ſooth her diſconcerted mind, and not unfrequently vented her ill humour on me, which however I bore with patience, finding in books, muſic, drawing, &c. the only ſolace I was capable of taſting."

"We

"We had not been many months in town, before ſhe determined to diſpoſe of me in marriage, to one of thoſe coxcombs who ſwarm in public life, and contrive to make a ſplendid appearance, by the aſſiſtance of a pack of cards or dice-box; how it was poſſible ſhe could think of ſacrificing a daughter, to one of thoſe deſpicable beings, is abſolutely unaccountable, unleſs, as I imagined to be the caſe, he were willing to take me on her own terms, that is to ſay, without a fortune; and there was moreover, great reaſon to ſuppoſe, ſhe was ſecretly deſirous of ridding her hands of one, whom ſhe could ſcarcely avoid conſidering, as a check on her unbecoming levities."

"You may imagine Madam, that attached as I were to young Ruſhford, I ſhould have been averſe to any propoſal of a matrimonial kind, much leſs could I think of complying with my mother's plan; I remonſtrated, petitioned, but in vain; ſhe told me, that I muſt either accept the perſon ſhe had ſelected, or

ſupport myſelf how I could, for that I ſhould immediately quit her home and protection."

"In this diſtreſs I was ſo happy as to meet with my faithful Edward, who eagerly propoſed a private marriage, as the only method of ſecuring me from the effects of her cruel and imprudent reſolves; all circumſtances conſidered I was of the ſame opinion with my lover, and therefore conſented to give him my hand; we were privately married, and for ſome time it remained a profound ſecret; but my mother, becoming more vehement, in her intention of marrying me to the wretch before mentioned, I threw myſelf at her feet and confeſſed that I was the wife of young Ruſhford. I had expected the acknowledgement would have been received with the greateſt rage, but ſhe treated it only with cool diſdain, and, with an air of indifference, replied, that as I had thought proper to diſpoſe of myſelf without her conſent, I was at liberty to ſeek ſupport from my huſband or his family, for that henceforth ſhe diſclaimed

ed all relation to me: with theſe words ſhe coolly left the room, and ſhortly after her woman came to me, with an order to quit the houſe immediately."

"I did ſo, and having previouſly diſpatched a note to my Edward, he met me in the Park, where with the moſt ſoothing tenderneſs he conſoled my diſtreſs, and alſo flattered my hopes of a cordial reception from his father; but in this point we were both unfortunately miſtaken, the old gentleman was too avaricious to forgive a meaſure which thwarted his darling paſſion; we preſented ourſelves with all poſſible humility before him, pleaded his former approbation of our attachment, and entreated protection from the unkindneſs of my ſurviving parent; he heard, all we had to ſay, with the ſame cool ſeverity as my mother had ſhewn before, and told us with a determined air, that as we had thought proper to form ſo imprudent a connexion, we muſt abide by the conſequences, for his part, he utterly diſowned us both."

"At

"At this ſevere declaration, I ſhould have ſunk on the floor in an agony of woe, but for the encircling arms of my dear Edward; he preſſed me to his heart, and with an accent I can never forget, ſaid, tho' all the world diſowns us my Caroline, we will find happineſs in each other, let us haſten from a place where pity and humanity no longer dwell, and ſeek a retreat, in which to enjoy, the delight of an approving conſcience and virtuous love; we have broken no law of duty, and are ſurely more ſinned againſt than ſinning."

"The world was now all before us, friends we had none to rely on, and conſolation could come to us from no ſource, but in the conſciouſneſs of our innocence and virtuous affection. We took a lodging in a private part of London, where, on the little money we could command, we ſubſiſted as happily as two perſons in ſuch a ſituation could poſſibly do; indeed, had it not been for ſome gloomy apprehenſions of the future, which ſometimes would intrude, we were certainly as happy as

any

any two who ever entered the bands of hymen; nothing could ſurpaſs the purity and tenderneſs of my Edward's affection; as often as the feeling tear gliſtened in my eye, he would conſole thoſe fears to which he affected the being a ſtranger, with painting better proſpects; fear not my life, he would ſay, while I have life and health we cannot want; ſomething will offer for our advantage, before this little ſtock of caſh is exhauſted; we have committed nothing criminal; we muſt, we will be bleſt; and I ſhall be enabled to ſupport my beloved Caroline, whoſe love alone, renders me happier than a monarch."

"Thus, unknown to the world, and deriving our felicity from each other, we paſſed twelvemonths, during which, we omitted no probable means of ſoftening our reſpective parents; but they both remained inexorable. I was now become the mother of this dear babe, which my delighted huſband every minute careſſed with tranſport, and pronounced himſelf the happieſt of men. One day having

having gone into the city, he returned with a countenance of mingled pain and pleaſure, telling me, he had met with an Eaſt India merchant, who had made him ſome very advantageous offers, if he choſe to ſettle in that part of the world; I inſtantly replied that the offer was too eligible to be rejected, and preſſed him ſo warmly to accept it, that at laſt he conſented, but added, "How my deareſt girl, can I think of expoſing you to hardſhips in a foreign country; that reflection alone counterbalances the pleaſure I ſhould otherwiſe feel in ſo flattering proſpect;" that replied I, ſhall be no obſtacle, we have yet ſufficient left for my ſubſiſtence in England, till you ſhall be enabled to provide for my reception, when I will follow you."

"How, cried he, what, brave the dangers of the ſea without a protector my Caroline?"

"My love, anſwered I, will be my protection, and the proſpect of rejoining my deareſt Edward will ſteel my heart againſt every

every womaniſh fear, as well as ſupport me under the pain of a ſeparation."

"Aſſuming a gaiety to which my heart was a ſtranger, I prevailed on my huſband to ſettle every thing for his voyage; the time of his departure at length arrived; he embarked on board an Indiaman, and by the return of the company's ſhips, I had the ſuperlative ſatisfaction of hearing he arrived ſafely at Madraſs."

"During this tedious interval, I ſupported my ſpirits as well as I could, by the care of my little darling, who ſo much reſembled her father, that I uſed to gaze hours on her face, weeping and ſmiling alternately.

"Before this period, my mother had given her hand to the very perſon ſhe had ſelected for me, and I had now the affliction to hear, that he was not only diſſipating her fortune in a rapid manner, but that he alſo treated her with ſo much inhumanity, that her health was viſibly on the decline."

"Altho' I could now expect to reap no pecuniary advantage by a reconciliation with my offended parent, I ardently ſought to effect it; but by the management I ſuppoſe of the brute her huſband, I was unable to obtain acceſs to her, either perſonally or by letter, and ſhortly afterwards, her deceaſe was announced in the newſpapers. Cruelly as ſhe had treated me, I paid a tribute to her memory, and earneſtly deſired to behold once more the countenance of my parent, before the grave was cloſed on her for ever; but even this, her huſband thought proper to deny, and accompanied the refuſal, with many ſevere reflections on her memory: altho' however, ſhe might have failed in ſome points of moral goodneſs, ſhe doubtleſs merited from him every return of gratitude."

"The following year brought me a letter from my faithful Ruſhford, importing that he had been extremely ſucceſsful, and was now, by the bleſſing of providence, in a fair way of acquiring a competeney; he urged me to embark

embark in the firſt veſſel that ſailed, and concluded a moſt affectionate letter with the ſweeteſt hopes of meeting me ſhortly in a country, where no unkind relations could interrupt our happineſs, which the bounty of heaven was preparing for us. To this beſt of men, and tendereſt of huſbands, was I on my way, when the accident, with which you, Madam, are already acquainted, occaſioned an unhappy interruption to my impatient ardors."

Here Mrs. Ruſhford concluded her narrative, and Mrs. Fitz Aubin, who had wept with her during the greateſt part of it, dried her eyes, and graſping the poor lady's hand with a ſmile of ſatisfaction, replied, and to this moſt worthy huſband you ſhall go my dear Madam; Mr. Fitz Aubin will inquire you a paſſage, and every thing ſhall be provided for the voyage; indeed, I cannot but in ſome meaſure think it a fortunate circumſtance for us, that by this accident we have an opportunity offered, of contributing ſomething to the promoting of

that

that happineſs you ſo well deſerve, and in the mean time, enjoy in this manſion, whatever chriſtian benevolence and genuine hoſpitality are called on to beſtow."

Mrs. Ruſhford on this occaſion, uttered all which might be expected from her ſenſibility, of which ſhe poſſeſſed ſo large a ſhare; the little time ſhe afterwards remained there, was ſufficient to eſtabliſh a very lively friendſhip, between her and her generous patroneſs, the conſequences of which are extant in the family at the preſent time; at length a ſhip was ready to ſail for the Indies, and Mrs. Ruſhford was prepared to embark for that part of the world a ſecond time with her little daughter, when, ſome papers having been received at the India-houſe, it was publickly announced that a veſſel in the company's ſervice had been loſt on a cruize not far from Madras and in the liſt of thoſe who had periſhed on the occaſion, the unhappy Caroline read the name of her huſband, Edward Ruſhford.

From

From that fatal moment, deſpair and melancholy rooted themſelves in her ſoul; in vain were the efforts of friendſhip and benevolence to eradicate the baneful ſenſations from her breaſt; a hopeleſs malady enſued, which terminated in a ſpeedy diſſolution; a few hours before her death, ſhe caſt her eyes wiſtfully on the little Ellen, then turned them on Mrs. Fitz Aubin, "this child, this unfortunate orphan, Madam, ſaid ſhe, muſt ſhortly have no mother, nor does the world afford her a friend."

"In me, returned that good lady, ſhe ſhall find both," nor did ſhe fail in one tittle of what at that feeling moment, her compaſſion had ſuggeſted. Mrs. Ruſhford, grateful and ſatisfied with the kind aſſurance, cloſed her eyes for ever, and from that period the amiable Ellen was conſidered as one of the Fitz Aubin family. As long as her excellent benefactreſs lived, Ellen experienced from her a mother's tenderneſs, nor did ſhe make the ſmalleſt diſtinction between Ellen and her own children,

children. At her death, which happily did not happen till Ellen had attained her ſixteenth year, ſhe committed Ellen to the love and protection of her huſband, with the ſame earneſtneſs, as ſhe did her own offspring. Mr. Fitz Aubin, to do him juſtice, had never been wanting in affection to the young orphan; her infant ſweetneſs had taken faſt hold of his heart, and from the time of his lady's death to the preſent, ſhe had experienced the ſame attention from him as Henrietta herſelf, which tho' not of the moſt delicate kind, was as much as a man of a volatile diſpoſition, and engaged in a ſecond marriage, could be expected to demonſtrate.—

Thus taught from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, to regard each other as brother and ſiſter, it cannot be deemed at all extraordinary, if ſentiments of a ſtill warmer kind, ſhould gradually have eſtabliſhed themſelves, in the artleſs boſoms of Henry and Ellen; in the careleſs moments of juvenile paſtime they felt a pleaſure in avowing their affection for each other,

other, and it has been before obſerved, that Mrs. Fitz Aubin perceived the tender attachment with pleaſure; whether her huſband had ever made a ſimilar obſervation is not certain: he had as yet never intimated any thing expreſſive of ſuch a remark.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"WITHOUT an object to attach the heart and confine the rovings of youthful fancy, it is highly probable I ſhould have been as diſſipated as any contemptible libertine of the age. Hail then, thou beſt of paſſions, which when permitted to flow in thy true direction, forms the ſource of all that is noble in our natures, or exquiſite in our enjoyments. I pity the wretch who prefers a gloomy celibacy, to the refined bliſs of loving and being beloved; the human ſoul naturally ſeeks a kindred being, on whom to repoſe, and without ſuch an acquiſition, life itſelf is a vacuum."

"Upon

"Upon my word, a fine ſentimental ſoliloquy brother," cried Henrietta, who unperceived, had joined him in the garden. Henry, would doubtleſs have felt a little diſconcerted at the interruption, had he not alſo perceived the preſence of Miſs Ruſhford, in whoſe mild eyes, he read a tacit approbation, of the ſentiment he had juſt expreſſed. "Confeſs at leaſt, cried he, that I was ſincere, in what I find ladies you have overheard, when I convince you, with what devotion, I have contemplated this lifeleſs image, for the ſake of the dear original." With theſe words, he drew the portrait of Miſs Ruſhford from his boſom, where he had conſtantly worn it, and preſented it to her ſight, with a look and air, which ſeemed to ſay, "and have you my Ellen been equally faithful." Without making any reply, ſhe immediately held out to him her right hand, on which was a bracelet, expreſſing his own miniature reſemblance; he kiſſed the fair hand, with a tranſport, which well expreſſed the triumph of his heart. "Trifles light as air," it has been ob-

 ſerved

ſerved by the greateſt genius of the age, "are to the jealous, confirmation ſtrong as proof of holy writ;" and if, of ſo much conſequence in the ſcale of miſery, it ſurely were but juſt to give them an equal weight, in the oppoſite balance: indeed, I believe it will be found, that happineſs, no leſs than miſery, often depends on circumſtances, the moſt trivial and unimportant. This little demonſtration of his Ellen's conſtancy, was in the eſtimation of Fitz Aubin, a confirmation of all his tendereſt hopes, and a torrent of delight ruſhed on his ſoul. Taking a hand of each of the two ladies he led them to a ſummer houſe, where ſeating themſelves, they began to chat, as is uſual between long parted friends, of a thouſand occurrences which had happened in the neighbourhood, during his abſence; as who were married, who dead, and ſo forth.

"And of all marvellous events brother, cried Henrietta, what do you think poſſible? Lord Langby is become a miniſterial man."

"This

"This circumſtance does not ſtrike me, as a very extraordinary one, ſiſter."

"No; and why I pray?"

"Becauſe, I always ſuſpected the motive of his Lordſhip's former conduct, to be vanity, by which he was charmed, in being conſidered as the head of a party; and yet, as by this change of ſentiment, he muſt have loſt that conſequence, I confeſs I find myſelf rather at a nonplus to account for it."

"Why then, as you have helped me to a key, I believe I can open the lock; know then, that it has been ſhrewdly ſuſpected, this once flaming orator, has deſerted his party, in conſequence of certain overtures made from the other ſide."

"And from what I always thought of his Lordſhip's principles, ſiſter, I can very readily believe it to be ſo; but what does my father ſay, of the conduct of his quondam

friend? I ſuppoſe their former intimacy is now at an end."

"You are much miſtaken, they are on more intimate terms than ever."

"That I confeſs, ſurpriſes me."

"Yes, and I aſſure you, we viſit inceſſantly."

"Do they viſit here?"

"The Ladies do not; on Mrs. Fitz-Aubin's account you may be ſure; for they have too much pride to viſit a waiting-woman: however, they are pleaſed to expreſs an earneſt deſire, that Ellen and myſelf, ſhould paſs a good part of our time at Langby Park."

"Their acquaintance muſt doubtleſs be a valuable acquiſition to you."

"There

"There you are again miſtaken, Henry; for neither Ellen nor myſelf, can be greatly enamoured with their ſociety; the youngeſt daughter is indeed a child, but I think the moſt eligible companion of the two; for Miſs Langby is——"

"Oh, by all means, give us your deſcription."

"Well then, ſhe is vain; pert; ignorant; and, tho' without any pretenſions to beauty, the moſt conceited woman in the world."

"Now I declare, ſiſter, I am inclined to ſuppoſe, ſhe is eminently handſome."

"How provoking; you ſuſpect then, envy has dictated the character I have drawn: I appeal to Ellen here, if it be not a juſt one."

"Oh, by all means, let us hear what my Ellen's opinion is, on the matter."

"Indeed, replied that young lady, I muſt be indulged in ſilence; for as you know Henrietta, we are to dine at the Park to-morrow, our brother will then be able to judge for himſelf."

"Admirable! cried Henrietta laughing, obſerve brother how irrefragably ſhe vouches for my candour, by ſo boldly challenging you to an interview with the Lady in queſtion."

Miſs Ruſhford bluſhed at the inference her fair friend had drawn, which Fitz Aubin perceiving, delicately gave a new turn to the converſation, and ſought to relieve his Ellen's tender embarraſſment, by directing his diſcourſe to the ſubject of Horticulture, both the ladies poſſeſſing great taſte and ſkill in the management of a garden.

On the following day, the Fitz Aubin family made a viſit to the Park, agreeable to appointment. Lord Langby received them with all the politeneſs of a courtier, but the

ſame

ſame could not be ſaid of his daughter, who, having no mother, did the honours of the houſe; for tho' ſhe had conſtantly avowed, the warmeſt regard for the two young ladies, ſhe hardly noticed their approach, till ſhe had ſatisfied herſelf with an impertinent ſtare at Fitz Aubin, whoſe perſon till then, had been unknown to her. As ſoon as Mr. Fitz Aubin had preſented his ſon, ſhe cried, affecting a whiſper to the ladies, yet ſufficiently loud to be heard by all the reſt, "Law my dear creatures, how could you uſe one ſo barbarouſly, not once to appriſe me of the honour of your brother's company? do you think I would poſſibly have been ſeen, ſuch a figure, by a ſtranger?" (it is however to be noted, that the lady was dreſſed in the moſt finiſhed ſtyle of elegance;) then, addreſſing herſelf immediately to Henry Fitz Aubin ſaid, "My dear ſir, who could have imagined you to be in Ireland; pray when did you arrive?" not that it is to be concluded, the queſtion was put from the ſmalleſt deſire of information; for, Fitz Aubin's arrival at his father's ſeat, had really been

known to Miſs Langby ſeveral days. His Lordſhip expreſſed a peculiar pleaſure at the preſence of Henry Fitz Aubin, and made his father ſome very handſome compliments, on his felicity, in poſſeſſing ſo accompliſhed a ſon.

"Oh for pity's ſake, my good Lord, cried Miſs Langby, reſerve thoſe fine ſpeeches for the young gentleman's abſence; you need not attempt to inſpire vanity, of which I dare anſwer, he has already a ſufficient ſtock."

"The danger however Madam, replied Henry, may not perhaps be ſo great, as if a lady had condeſcended to honour me thus."

"Upon my honour, retorted ſhe, laughing loud, I ſuſpect you are an impudent fellow Fitz Aubin."

"And if he be, cried Lord Langby, I ſuſpect Beſs, you'll not like him the worſe."

A footman announcing the dinner on the table, put a ſtop to a converſation, which had

had not impreſſed Fitz Aubin with the higheſt idea of Miſs Langby's companionable talents, who, a little diſconcerted at her father's rejoinder, prepared to do the honours of the table, at which it was obſerved, ſhe directed her attentions, rather to the younger than the elder gentlemen. The ladies preparing ſome time after dinner, to adjourn to the drawing room, Miſs Langby demanded of Fitz Aubin, whether he was fond of political debate? comprehending the meaning of the inquiry, he replied, "Not Madam when the ladies will admit me of their party."

"Then come along with us; we will take pity on you for once."

When they had entered the drawing room, Henry obſerving a guitar to lay on the table, took it up, and preſenting it to Miſs Langby, ſaid, "Will you favour us dear Madam?"

"That chit, Charlotte, cried ſhe, has left this fooliſh inſtrument here I ſuppoſe; ſhe

thrums on it now and then, but for my part I deteſt muſic."

"Can that be poſſible? cried Fitz Aubin; the female ſoul Madam, muſt have been caſt in the very mould of harmony."

He then, with an expreſſive countenance, preſented the inſtrument to Miſs Ruſhford, who immediately began to touch the ſtrings; and he, at a nod from her, accompanied the ſoft notes with his voice. 'Twas melody itſelf, tho' grating to the ears of Miſs Langby, who both by her looks and geſture, diſcovered ſtrong ſymptoms of diſſatisfaction, not at the muſic, for that ſhe well knew was exquiſite; but at the mode of amuſement her company had fixed on: for ſhe had ſecretly hoped to engroſs the attention of Fitz Aubin ſimply to herſelf. At length, totally impatient, ſhe aroſe, and not altogether conſiſtent with politeneſs, interrupted the little concert, by propoſing a walk in the Park; the weather was ſultry, and the hour unfit for walking; her gueſts how-

ever, were too well-bred to refuſe attendance; they ſtrolled into the Park, and were ſhewn a ſmall flock of ſheep, fancifully decorated with artificial flowers, which Miſs Langby aſſured the company, were her peculiar charge.

"You are fond of paſtoral amuſements, Madam," ſaid Henry.

"Immenſely ſo;—la! what can be ſo charming, as the lives which the ſhepherds and ſhepherdeſſes uſed to lead, in the plains of Arcadia?"

"'Tis a pretty picture of ideal happineſs," cried Henrietta, laughing.

"Do you ſuppoſe then it was never realized?" aſked Miſs Langby.

"I dare ſay, my dear, you have not ſuch an idea."

"Indeed but I have, and to ſay the truth

have a ſcheme in my head of renewing it, by turning ſhepherdeſs myſelf, only (leering very ſignificantly at Fitz Aubin) I have hitherto been at a loſs for ſome handſome ſwain, to aſſiſt me, in looking after my flock."

"And will ſtill remain ſo, I fear, cried Henrietta, as the gentlemen of our age ſeem devoted to different avocations."

"For my part, ſaid Ellen, I can ſcarcely imagine any thing more inſipid, than what is deſcribed, as the paſtoral life."

"Oh, for heaven's ſake! let us hear Miſs Ruſhford's ſyſtem of paſſing her time."

"A rational being, Madam, has no occaſion to feel much at a loſs in this reſpect, having ſo many opportunities of being uſeful."

"I comprehend you, interrupted the other, with a diſdainful air; why certainly it is fit, that

that people of inferior condition ſhould think thus."

"And none I preſume Madam, rejoined Henry, are placed beyond the ſphere of uſefulneſs, in ſome ſhape or other."

"Hold your tongue, man, I want to aſk Miſs Ruſhford, whether ſhe would exclude amuſements, from her plan of life?"

"By no means."

"Of what kind, might I preſume, ſhould thoſe be?"

"In the firſt place, the ſociety of intelligent and worthy friends; next, intellectual pleaſures; and thirdly, if I poſſeſſed the means, examining into and aſſiſting the condition of the poor and diſtreſſed."

"And

"And ſhould you really call the laſt, a pleaſant mode of devoting your time?"

"I am certain, it would afford an exalted pleaſure."

"Oh I am abſolutely ſick; Fitz Aubin, I am ſure you muſt be moped to death, in the company of theſe poor ſouls, and therefore out of pity, I find I muſt give you permiſſion to viſit me frequently."

"Such a permiſſion Madam, muſt at all times be eſteemed an honour, tho', if I wait till tired of the ſociety of theſe ladies, I doubt I ſhall not readily avail myſelf thereof."

"Upon my word; I begin to ſuſpect you are a ſort of a dull fellow."

"And for fear I ſhould abſolutely demonſtrate myſelf ſuch, have the goodneſs Madam to relieve me, by joining the gentlemen within,

in, who, if I miſtake not, expect us to tea by this time."

Miſs Langby looking at her watch, obſerved that the hint was not amiſs, for ſhe knew his Lordſhip choſe that repaſt pretty early; the party therefore fatigued by the heat, but much more ſo, by the unmeaning loquacity of the lady, returned to the houſe. They would not be prevailed on to ſup, and as Mr. Fitz Aubin choſe to return in the carriage, the three young people enjoyed a pleaſant walk acroſs ſome beautiful meadows, on one of the fineſt evenings the ſummer had produced.—On their way, the converſation naturally turned on the viſit, and Ellen with rather unuſual earneſtneſs in her manner, demanded of Fitz Aubin, what he thought of Miſs Langby?

"I do not know, replied he, that I ought to anſwer that queſtion at preſent."

"Why ſo?" cried both the ladies.

"Becauſe

"Becauſe the lady had the misfortune, to be placed in a diſadvantageous light, by the preſence of two of the moſt amiable women in the world."

"Vaſtly polite brother."

"You were not uſed Henry, to anſwer my inquires by an empty compliment," returned Miſs Ruſhford gravely.

"Nor will I ever, my deareſt Ellen; I aſſure you, I ſpoke merely the language of ſincerity, and I again repeat, that the man would be in danger of being guided by prejudice, who ſhould form an opinion of Miſs Langby when you were preſent."

"We ſhall get nothing out of him my dear," cried Miſs Fitz Aubin, ſecretly diſappointed, at not hearing him explicitly declare a contempt for that lady.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

ON the banks of a ſmall ſtream, which glided at the bottom of the garden, ſtood a ſummer houſe, which Fitz Aubin before his going to England, had made uſe of as a kind of ſtudy; here he had placed his books, papers, &c. and frequently paſſed the afternoon in this agreeable retreat, reading aloud to the young ladies, when they condeſcended to bring thither their work; he now made conſiderable additions to the library, and alſo furniſhed this apartment with a complete ſet of mathematical

matical inſtruments, intending here, to devote ſome part of each day, to the tuition of his two brothers, whoſe education, he perceived with deep regret, had been much neglected; they were amiable youths, and Henry's fraternal affection was too ardent, to ſuffer them to remain deſtitute of thoſe mental attainments, which he had both ſufficient leiſure and abilities to impart. As he was one day diſcharging the office of preceptor to them, Henrietta and Ellen, arm in arm, entered the ſummer houſe.

"Do you know brother, ſaid the former, that we have been deviſing a ſcheme to defeat Miſs Langby's prophecy, and in order to prevent your being wearied with our converſation, we reſolve to become ſomewhat more intelligent, than we are at preſent."

"Yes, added Ellen, we intend to become your pupils Harry, and to beg of you to beſtow on us, ſome mental embelliſhments."

"What

"What can embelliſh minds, already ſo perfect as thoſe of my charming ſiſters?"

"Ah! I ſee, anſwered Henrietta, he has brought from Oxford the very temper of a Gownſman.—I'll wage a thouſand pounds, he thinks a woman has no occaſion for any knowledge, beyond that of making ragouts and confectionaries."

"You injure me, Henrietta, for it has often been to me a ſubject of regret, that cuſtom, ſhould have ſo much diſregarded the cultivation of thoſe intellectual abilities, with which nature, has ſo liberally furniſhed, her laſt and faireſt work. I have ſeldom been in a ball room, where beauty has appeared with all the aid of exterior ornament, without ſecretly lamenting, that the lovely objects ſhould be little better than ſo many beautiful machines, deſtitute of every valuable idea;—this, perhaps, may be going too far;—it is certain however, that the female underſtanding is ſeldom exalted by education,

tion, to the degree of improvement it is capable to attain."

"It is the ſentiment of an amiable french writer, ſaid Miſs Ruſhford, that in the education of your ſex, the ſole regard is uſually paid to intellectual improvement, to the total neglect of thoſe external graces, without which, learning itſelf, diſguſts; while in the tuition of daughters, the whole attention is confined merely to perſonal embelliſhment."

"The error my dear Ellen, reſumed he, is common in both reſpects; but I am ſo far from approving the general mode of female education, that as I believe the ladies excel us in acuteneſs of perception, I would have their mental abilities enlarged as much as poſſible, were it only that the virtue for which we ſo much adore them, might be the effect of principle, and not as it frequently is, a feeble dependant on prejudice or circumſtances alone."

"Why

"Why now I am charmed, cried his ſiſter, to find you ſo readily give into our ſcheme; but not to affright you all at once, obſerve, we do not mean to dive into the abſtruſe labyrinths of erudition, for which, perhaps, we have not ſolidity of abilities; our aim is only to acquire a knowledge of polite literature, and therefore you ſhall, if you pleaſe, give us a courſe of lectures on the belles lettres."

"With all my heart, dear girls, and I muſt indeed be a wretch without ſoul, were I not to feel an exquiſite felicity, in the delicious employment, you have contrived for me."

In conſequence of the above plan, the firſt three weeks of Fitz Aubin's return, were ſpent in a more delightful manner than it is poſſible to deſcribe; the refined pleaſures of literature, thus ſingularly united with the tendereſt endearments of love, prepared a conſtant feaſt of intellectual luxury, which the ſenſibility of his ſoul eminently qualified him to enjoy. So exquiſite a life muſt have been

above

above the condition of mortality, had it not like every earthly ſatisfaction, wanted ſtability. Mr. Fitz Aubin being one day with his eldeſt ſon alone, thus addreſſed him, "I am pleaſed Harry, with the kind attention you pay your two brothers; they much need the aſſiſtance of education; but my fortune has not allowed me to provide it for them; indeed, the expence I have been at in order to qualify you, to appear in life, as the heir of our houſe, has been ſenſibly felt, and ſtill muſt be I doubt; however, I hope you will one day, make the family ſome amends."

"I confeſs I do not clearly comprehend you ſir; ſurely, every return of gratitude and affection, as a ſon to a kind father, I am bound to make, and that I truſt I"—

"Aye, aye,—no doubt you will,—but Harry, what am I to do with theſe lads, Charles and William?"

"Do, ſir, did you not always deſign one for

for the church, and the other for the army?"

"Doubtleſs I did, but then, to breed a lad to either of theſe profeſſions, who has neither fortune nor intereſt, is worſe than making him a ſhoemaker."

"Your family and connexions, ſir, will be reſpected; and with regard to fortune, I cannot once imagine you will ſuffer them to be without it."

"Where the plague ſhould I have a fortune to give them? you, will take the eſtate; your ſiſter muſt have a trifle to portion her off; and then, what is to become of William and Charles? you know, I have ſtill a younger ſtock to provide for; the d—l was in me I think for marrying a ſecond time; a firſt marriage ought to have cured me of ſuch folly."

Piqued at the oblique reflection caſt on his mother's memory, Fitz Aubin replied, perhaps

haps with more ſpirit than prudence, "The happineſs once enjoyed in the marriage ſtate, is perhaps, the beſt excuſe, which a man incumbered with children can make, for a ſecond marriage."

"How, ſir, do you reproach me?"

"By no means, my dear father, did I intend any ſuch thing; far be it from your children, to ſuppoſe that you had not a right to pleaſe yourſelf."

"I fancy indeed I had ſuch a right, and from you I do not believe I ſhall ever find an improper behaviour; but your ſiſter, I muſt tell you, has not ſhewn that reſpect to Mrs. Fitz Aubin, which ſhe ought."

"I am ſorry to hear it, but I cannot think Henrietta's diſpoſition a bad one, and perhaps if you will condeſcend, ſir, to conſider——."

"Well

"Well, well, but as we were talking before, what is to become of Charles and William."

"My dear ſir, if there be any thing in my power which can make you eaſy on that ſcore, you need only expreſs your ſentiments."

"There is ſomething depends on you Harry, I confeſs."

"I ſuppoſe then, ſir, you allude to a diviſion of property, and in that point aſſure yourſelf I ſhall cheerfully acquieſce; for indeed, I have ever conſidered the law of entail, as moſt unjuſt and oppreſſive; 'tis the injuring of many, for the aggrandizement of a few, and more adapted to the age of feudal tyranny, than the intereſts of a free ſtate."

"When,—why—where gotteſt thou this fine notion young man?—it ſhall never weigh with me I can tell you; my eſtate ſhall deſcend to you, and your heirs for ever, except

you offend me, and in that caſe, it ſhall be William's on the ſame terms."

Here the converſation ſeemed taking an unpleaſant turn, for which reaſon, Fitz Aubin, who knew too well, the irritable temper of his father, made the beſt excuſe he could to quit the room; not without feeling himſelf a good deal perplexed, at ſome things which his father had intimated, tho' in too inconcluſive a manner, for him to be able to draw a concluſion as to their tendency;—going out he met Henrietta in the garden, "Whither ſo faſt brother, and ſo very ſerious too, what pray is the occaſion of that penſive air?"

"Leave me my dear ſiſter; I am not in the moſt ſerene humour at preſent I confeſs."

"You need not tell me that; my father I preſume has put you out of ſorts; but

be comforted,—here is Miſs Langby coming to drink tea."

"And did you intend that intelligence, as a ſpecific for the ſpleen, Henrietta?"

"To be ſure I did,—Miſs Langby's preſence muſt afford you pleaſure."

"Trifling girl," in a tone of diſpleaſure.

"Perhaps I am more ſerious than you imagine."

"What can you mean, ſiſter?"

"Why, that you *muſt* love Miſs Langby."

"*Muſt* love her,—impoſſible—come I ſee you have a meaning to this;—out with it Henrietta, I beſeech you."

"In few words then, Henry, Miſs Langby, I ſuſpect, is paſſionately in love with you."

"I am not quite ſo ſanguine in my conceptions, ſiſter, as to admit the idea; but granting it were ſo, does it neceſſarily follow, that I muſt return the ſentiment?"

"I am afraid you will have ſome difficulty to get off, for I doubt my father's being of late ſo much with his Lordſhip, bodes no good."

"Pſhaw child! there is nothing extraordinary in this; Lord Langby loves his bottle, and my father dreads ſolitude;—that's all."

"I hope it is;— but I am rather of opinion there is a project on foot, which will not be very pleaſing to us. You muſt know, that laſt night as Lord Langby was about to take his leave, I heard him ſay to my father, in a low tone of voice, "This alliance, my good friend, will bind our families in one common intereſt."

intereſt." "I am glad, anſwered my father, that the lady comes into our meaſure." "She has ſet her heart on the match, I can tell you, reſumed his Lordſhip, and would not eaſily be diſappointed."

"This you overheard, ſaid Fitz Aubin, recovering from a profound reverie;—then hear, my dear ſiſter, my unalterable reſolution;—no power on earth;—no conſideration whatever, ſhall ever ſeparate me from Ellen Ruſhford. Was ſhe not the wife aſſigned me by the ſecret wiſhes of the beſt of mothers?—Have not our affections been united with our increaſing years, and our mutual tenderneſs confirmed by expanding reaſon?"

"Moſt true, and therefore it is for you both, that my heart has bled in ſecret, ever ſince thoſe ſuſpicions aroſe in my mind; and indeed, on my own account, am I no leſs grieved; for my happineſs, is bound up with that of yourſelf and our ſweet Ellen;—poor girl, ſhould my father now oppoſe your union, it will break her heart."

"I think, Henrietta, he could not have been ignorant of our mutual tenderneſs."

"I think ſo likewiſe, and indeed I believe would not have diſapproved it, but for this unfortunate paſſion of Miſs Langby,—her fortune you know is large,—her father's intereſt at court unqueſtionable."

"Miſs Langby,—I deteſt her character,—but were ſhe an angel, and could bring me the Indies for her dower, my heart is ſo unalterably fixed, that no force or fraud can divert it to another object."

Here the approach of Miſs Ruſhford interrupted the tête-à-tête, and both Fitz Aubin and his ſiſter, judging it beſt to conceal their painful ſuſpicions from her at the preſent, aſſumed an appearance of gaiety, which their hearts at that time, could not but be ſtrangers to.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

NATURE having endowed our young lover with that acuteneſs of ſenſibility, which is ſeldom favourable to the cool doctrines of patience, it may be ſuppoſed he could ill endure, the painful ſuſpenſe which the preceding converſation with his ſiſter had excited; and therefore, rather ſought than avoided the preſence of his father, in hopes ſome opportunity would occur of fathoming more exactly, the nature of his ſentiments, nor was it long before ſuch an event really happened.

"Harry, ſaid the old gentleman, with an air of pleaſantry, I ſhould be glad to know, how you like our fair neighbour, Miſs Langby, as I think you had not ſeen her before your return from Oxford."

"I am not apt, ſir, to ſcrutinize the ladies with any particular exactneſs; Miſs Langby is entitled to my higheſt reſpect, as the daughter of your friend."

"That I know, and I am glad you think ſo; ſtill however, I deſire a more explicit anſwer to my queſtion."

"My dear ſir, wherefore ſhould I be expected to ſpeak more deciſively of a lady, whoſe perſon and accompliſhments, demand the utmoſt deference and politeneſs on my part."

"Be pleaſed to obſerve ſir, that it is your father who addreſſes you, and who expects not,

not, nor will accept this idle trifling, therefore to my queſtion at once."

"Since I am thus called on for ſincerity, I anſwer, ſir, that I think Miſs Langby's perſon her chief recommendation."

"And what pray, (ſuperciliouſly) do you perceive amiſs in her converſation and manners."

"If that conſideration, ſir, could be of any importance to me, I ſhould readily reply, that I utterly diſlike both; but I hope there are no particular motives for theſe cloſe interrogatories."

"Indeed, but there are; for to be brief, I have ſelected that lady to be your wife."

"My wife, ſir!"

"Yes, and I hope you do not intend to give me any trouble on the occaſion."

"I will not; for to decide the point at once, I muſt declare, that were Miſs Langby, even the moſt amiable woman in the world, I would not entertain a thought of the kind."

"Mighty fine truly! and pray Mr. Poſitive, your reaſons for this curious reſolution."

"My father cannot be ignorant of them; for I am perſuaded, he has long ſince explored the ſtate of my affections."

"Truly ſirrah, I had other buſineſs on my hands, than to watch the motions of a wrong headed young fool, as I find you to be;—you have then engaged yourſelf without my knowledge, have you ſir?"

"Not ſo, my dear father; for my attachment to Ellen Ruſhford, could not have been concealed from you."

"But did I conſent to it?"

"You

"You never ſir diſapproved it, and the regard you ever manifeſted to that dear girl, encouraged me to believe."—

"No matter, (ſternly) what you believe, ſir, Miſs Langby is the perſon you are to marry; and I now tell you, every thing is agreed on between my Lord and me; therefore all evaſion on your part will be ineffectual, for I am firmly reſolved to hear nothing you would ſay."

With theſe words Mr. Fitz Aubin walked out of the room in violent wrath, and the only reſource left his now diſtreſſed ſon, was the adviſing with Henrietta what were beſt to be done, in order to move his father from ſo unpropitious a reſolution. The wretchedneſs which ſuch an eclairciſſement had painted on the countenance of Fitz Aubin, could not be concealed from the obſervation of Miſs Ruſhford; ſhe accoſted him on the evening of the ſame day, and in an earneſt tone, entreated to know the cauſe of his chagrin;—he turned from her

to hide if poſſible the anguiſh of his heart, unwilling to diſtreſs her by ſuch unpleaſant intelligence.

"I forbear then to aſk, ſaid ſhe, ſince 'tis plain, Fitz Aubin has ſecrets, which belong not to Ellen Ruſhford."

The reproach was more than he could bear; he gave her a look of ineffable tenderneſs, which expreſſing at once the feelings of his ſoul, ſhe reſumed, in an accent of mingled grief and ſweetneſs, "Henry, I fear I can but too readily gueſs the cauſe of that diſquiet, which in vain you would conceal from me; all is not right; your father of late has viſibly abated of that kindneſs, with which till now he honoured me; and to-day at dinner, I think he diſcovered ſomething like deep diſpleaſure, in his behaviour to me. Mrs. Fitz Aubin too obſerves me, with a ſort of malicious contempt.—Is it then kind, my Harry, to conceal from me a ſecret in which, I doubt I have too great a concern? muſt your

your Ellen be left to increaſe the univerſal chagrin, by her ignorance of that which it concerns her moſt to know? aſſure me with your uſual ſincerity, that the viſible uneaſineſs of the family, has no relation to myſelf, and I will importune you no more."

"Ellen, returned he, my deareſt Ellen, you know that honoured ſaint my mother, often and often has joined our hands in her's, and breathed an affectionate prayer, that hereafter we might be one."

"Moſt true."

"Promiſe me then, that no change of circumſtance will ever alienate your heart, from the man you have condeſcended to own a tenderneſs for; aſſure me but of this, and I ſhall defy the efforts of ill fortune."

"Have you then diſcovered, an abatement of that tenderneſs on my ſide."

"Oh

"Oh no! thou art all which my faithful heart can deſire; and yet, I fear ſome untoward circumſtance, may produce a renunciation of thoſe ſweet promiſes which formed my bliſs."

"Why ſhould you fear this; perhaps ſome pecuniary misfortune has excited an alarm, tho' indeed I ſuſpected another cauſe;—however, if it be ſo, if a loſs of fortune be that which diſturb you, then take my willing, my moſt ſolemn aſſurance, that were you, Henry, reduced to beggary, this, nor aught beſide, can everabate my long cheriſhed affection for the ſon of my benefactors."

"Then I am again moſt happy, for now my Ellen I muſt tell you, that very ſhortly I ſhall be a beggar,—give me then your hand."

"I do it moſt cordially, and with it a promiſe never to be another's, till you yourſelf releaſe me of that promiſe."

"Then

"Then fate do now thy worſt, and I may boldly open the cauſe of my recent miſery; know then, my deareſt Ellen, that my father, affecting ignorance of our attachment, has had the cruelty to propoſe Miſs Langby to me for a wife."

"'Tis then as I at firſt ſuſpected, (trembling) raſh, imprudent Fitz Aubin; wherefore did you delude me into a promiſe, which I ought never to have made,—you have deceived me Henry."

"Do you then deſire to revoke it?"

"For your ſake I do."

"Say rather for your own, had you ever loved with half the ardour, which has conſtantly animated my boſom, Ellen, you could not have admitted the idea."

"Reproach me not, (burſting into tears) you know not what at this dreadful moment, paſſes in my bleeding heart."

At that inſtant the tête-à-tête of the two lovers was interrupted by the appearance of Miſs Fitz Aubin.

"This is exactly as I expected, cried ſhe, I thought I ſhould find you, like a couple of turtle doves, moaning and cooing out your ſorrows; but take courage, I have done your buſineſs, in a quarter of an hour, in ſhort I have ſeen Miſs Langby."

"Surely you have not been ſo indelicate, cried Miſs Ruſhford, as to have—"

"As to have told her every thing, indeed I have, and have moſt charming expectations from the meaſure."

"You have acted both generouſly and wiſely ſiſter, ſaid Fitz Aubin; it is highly probable, Miſs Langby's inclinations were as little conſulted as my own, in this affair, and ſince ſhe knows my affections are previouſly engaged, will herſelf break off ſo diſagreeable a meaſure."

"As to her inclinations, brother, I fancy there is little encouragement from that conſideration; however, her pride at leaſt will prompt her to reject you, for I have told her of the connexion between Miſs Ruſhford and you, and moreover mentioned every circumſtance, which could lead her to conclude, that an attachment of ſo long ſtanding, can never be diſſolved in favour of any other woman, however advantageous the propoſal might be."

"And ſhe generouſly reſolved to wave all farther proceedings?"

"Not ſo, perhaps, for I could ſee nothing like generoſity or feeling in her behaviour, but I am certain her vanity was piqued, and ſhe affected to treat the whole affair with much merriment, notwithſtanding ſhe was ſenſibly mortified; however as ſhe will now without doubt, put an end to the negociation, it matters not to you what her motives may be."

This

This communication had a moſt pleaſing effect on Fitz Aubin, whoſe proſpects, in conſequence, opened at once into that boundleſs field of future felicity, in which his imagination had often expatiated; but not ſo Miſs Ruſhford; the delicacy of her ſentiments had received a ſevere ſhock, by the idea of being conſidered as an obſtacle, to the views of her lover's father; theſe painful feelings were ſenſibly aggravated, by the cool and diſtant behaviour of both Mr. and Mrs. Fitz Aubin, nor was the latter inclined to miſs any opportunity of dropping diſreſpectful inuendos, and oblique ſatires, expreſſive of the defeat, her own intereſted views had received, by Henry's immoveable attachment to that young lady.

Some time now paſſed without any viſits having been received from, or paid to the Langby family. Mr. Fitz Aubin's behaviour to Miſs Ruſhford, was ſullen and reſerved, and her feelings on the occaſion, will readily be conceived by the reader of ſenſibility,

bility, tho' for the ſake of Henry and his amiable ſiſter, ſhe aſſumed a compoſure which ſhe neither did, or could poſſibly poſſeſs under ſuch circumſtances. Whether the matrimonial negotiation between Lord Langby and Mr. Fitz Aubin, was really broken off, was an impenetrable ſecret to the younger part of the family, not a ſyllable being ever dropped, which could lead to the remoteſt conjecture on the ſubject; at length the demeanour of Mr. Fitz Aubin, all at once underwent a remarkable change, from conſtantly wearing the aſpect of diſpleaſure, he became more ſociable and communicative, while his countenance and manner ſeemed to have more of ſorrow than of anger in them. To ſee the rigid brow of paternal ſeverity relax, was a ſenſible ſatisfaction to Henry and Henrietta, particularly as they alſo beheld their beloved Ellen, honoured once more with the kind notice of their father; the affection which till of late he had manifeſted towards her, apparently revived; ſhe was again his child, and the worthy hearts of theſe three young perſons,

ſons, admitted the ſweet rays of hope and peace. To account for this pleaſing alteration, it muſt be obſerved, that Mr. Fitz Aubin was not naturally averſe to the ſocial affections; but the various ſchemes in which he had been was conſtantly engaged, during the early part of his life, had deluded his attention, from the domeſtic happineſs which courted him, during the life of his former excellent lady; the ſecond marriage, in which he had imprudently engaged, could not be expected to nouriſh the tender ſenſibilities of a father, as the woman he had choſen, was of ſo extravagant a turn, as greatly to heighten thoſe embarraſſments of fortune, which it had been the ſtudy of his firſt wife to redreſs. By the arts of this baſe perſon, he was firſt inſtigated to agree to the alliance, with the Langby family, notwithſtanding the entire knowledge he had long poſſeſſed, of his ſon's attachment to Miſs Ruſhford; and to the ſame cauſe it was alſo owing, that he had treated both her and his own children, with ſo much hauteur during ſome paſt weeks. At length how-

however, he was awakened to a more pacific diſpoſition, by the immediate approach of a pecuniary diſtreſs, which he could not but be conſcious was in a great meaſure, the fatal conſequence of his ill judged ſecond marriage; under this impreſſion, nature had time to rouſe from the conſtraint ſhe had long endured, and the weight alſo of ſome alarming apprehenſions, produced the above change, and alſo the converſation to be ſeen in the enſuing chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

MR. Fitz Aubin had for ſome days complained of an indiſpoſition, and at length partly from this cauſe, and partly from a heavy depreſſure of ſpirits, he confined himſelf almoſt entirely to his chamber. Henrietta having been a conſiderable time with him alone, returned to the parlour, where Henry and Ellen were ſitting, and with a face bathed in tears, graſped the hand of the latter with peculiar energy.—" My dear Ellen, ſaid ſhe, in a voice ſcarcely articulate my father requeſts you to attend him in a quarter of an hour; I tremble for the reſult of the conference,

rence, (looking compaſſionately on her brother,) for we are it ſeems, a ruined family."

Perceiving her auditors too deeply intereſted to interrupt her, Miſs Fitz Aubin thus reſumed, "When I entered the room, my father was ſitting with his eyes rivetted on the floor, and a letter laying on the table, which I preſently knew to be from Lord Langby, "Is it you Henrietta?" ſaid he.—

"It is ſir, how do you find yourſelf?"

"Exquiſitely miſerable; this brother of yours reſolves I ſhall be ſo."

"Oh ſir, my brother I am aſſured, would die to ſerve you."

"No, no, he can endure to ſee me ſtripped of all, ſtarving in a goal."

"Heaven forbid,—he cannot poſſibly perceive how ſo dreadful a conſequence would

reſult from his love to Ellen. Oh, ſir, think I beſeech you, on the perfections of that dear girl, whom you have always taught to conſider you as a father."

"Ellen, replied he, greatly agitated, I well know is amiable and good, and moſt gladly ſhould I have embraced her as the wife of my ſon;—but you know not the nature of the caſe my poor child."

"Why then, will not my father explain thoſe alarming intimations to his children, who live but in his happineſs, and who at preſent are unable to conjecture, why the treaty between the two families, may not honourably and ſafely be broken off."

"It cannot, you know my fortune was never large, but by the virtues of your dear mother, might have been ſufficient to our comfort.—What ſhall I ſay Henrietta, my fooliſh marriage with her waiting maid has undone us all,—but you muſt hate me ſhould I proceed further."

"Say not ſo, ſir, I entreat; could you read the love we bear you."

"And which, interrupted he, I little merit my Henrietta; but to proceed, one expence upon another, involved me far beyond the income of my eſtate; I was embarraſſed, and preſuming on Lord Langby's friendſhip, opened my affairs to him. He advanced me from time to time very conſiderable ſums, for the payment of which, I am engaged by bond and judgement. In order to ſecure myſelf on this ſcore, as well as to provide for the intereſts of an increaſing family, I was prevailed on to conſent to the overtures of alliance, for I aſſure you, the propoſal proceeded from his lordſhip, tho' at the ſame time I was conſcious, I muſt do violence to my ſon's inclination, by my conſent: however, I thought his regard for Ellen might be nothing more than a childiſh attachment, which reaſon and intereſt would prevail with him to abandon; I was miſtaken it ſeems; Lord Langby and his daughter conceive themſelves ill uſed, by his

averſion to the match, and in conſequence, as I ſuppoſe, his Lordſhip has this day ſent to demand payment of the vaſt ſums he has lent me. Theſe my Henrietta, you know, cannot be paid but by the ruin of my family; one method, and that the only one, of warding off the heavy blow, I had hoped—but no matter,—leave me my child—my brain is on fire,—I have been the worſt of fathers;—leave me child, and in a quarter of an hour, let the poor injured Ellen know I would ſpeak with her."

"Here Miſs Fitz Aubin finiſhed her relation, and Ellen riſing, with an air of mingled grief and ſorrow, ſaid "That time is now expired, I will go."—Fitz Aubin catching hold of her agitated hand, entreated ſhe would preſerve her firmneſs of mind: "Condeſcend, added he, to avow the ſentiments with which you have honoured your faithful Henry, and we ſhall yet be happy, for I have firmly reſolved to reſign all right and title to the eſtate, which ſhall be free for my father to diſpoſe of,

for

for the benefit of himſelf and the reſt of the family,—I deſire neither, nor will accept any portion, but my Ellen's love."

Miſs Ruſhford made no reply, and inſtantly withdrew, leaving her lover in a ſtate of anxiety not to be deſcribed.

"Siſter, cried he, with wild diſorder in his looks, what are the misfortunes in our family, which demand of me to give up Ellen Ruſhford, and to marry the daughter of Lord Langby?—Oh, never! never!—yet, if the renunciation of all my earthly happineſs, could evade my father's miſery, I would make the ſacrifice;—but it is required of me, not only to be a wretch, but a villain alſo;—what! muſt I break through all thoſe ſacred ties, which have united my ſoul to that of Ellen's?—ſhall I abandon a wretched orphan, whom I have taught the leſſen of love?—one, whom the beſt of mothers, with her dying voice, bequeathed to my tendereſt regard?—no, Henrietta! I will die firſt; I reſign all claim

to any portion of the family inheritance, and what more can be neceſſary to my father's quiet?"

When Miſs Ruſhford got to Mr. Fitz Aubin's apartment, he roſe to receive her, and giving a deep groan, folded her to his boſom; "Ellen, cried he, my dear Ellen, I have ſcarcely deſerved this kind attention from you,—my heart tells me I have not."

"You have deſerved, the warmeſt love and duty of a child from me, ſir;—is it not in you I ſee the protector,—the benefactor?—can I ever be unmindful of the gratitude and affection which that character demands of me?"

"Indeed, my Ellen, I have ever loved you with a father's tenderneſs;—but grief of late, has harrowed up my ſoul,—my child, you ſee before you, one of the moſt miſerable of mankind;—it is perhaps in your power to—but I ought not to require it,—tell me however with ſincerity, how ſtand affairs between you and my ſon?"

To this Miſs Ruſhford, after a ſhort pauſe, replied, "It hitherto has been my pride, ſir, to know that your ſon honoured me with a conſtant and tender affection, and it would be culpable in me not to confeſs alſo, that I have ever returned that ſentiment with equal ardour; nor were I conſcious of any error, in nouriſhing an attachment, which your dear and excellent lady noticed with approbation, and which I muſt ſay, no time can efface."

"I condemn you not my child, with a bitter ſigh; that Henry ſhould have been ſuſceptible of your merit, ſurpriſes me not, neither could I have deſired for him a wife of ſuperior excellence, had circumſtances favoured your union, which with truth I own would have been the bleſſing of my age; but oh, my Ellen! can you forgive me the unworthy idea;—you muſt deſpiſe me, while I own, that from your virtue I can alone expect ſalvation; your's muſt be the heroiſm; my ſon neither can nor will have the neceſſary fortitude, except you reſolve to give him up."

Perceiving her mind greatly agitated, he fell on his knees before her, and thus continued, "Have pity, my noble girl, on this aged breaſt; here, in this poſture, I entreat;—look on theſe white hairs; will you not ſave them from miſery; a father from a priſon; his children from the extreme of poverty? on you my hopes depend, and not on my ſon, who wants the reſolution, which your exalted mind is capable of exerting."

The old gentleman was prevented from farther urging ſo ſingular a requeſt, by obſerving the countenance of Miſs Ruſhford, overſpread with death-like paleneſs; he was alarmed, and inſtantly ringing the bell, Henrietta immediately appeared, who, with much difficulty, brought her beloved companion back to life; ſhe then led her into the garden for the benefit of the air, where they paſſed near two hours together, after which Miſs Ruſhford retired to her own apartment, and Henry was compelled to endure, the torment of ſuſpence, for ſome time longer. All

he

he could learn from his ſiſter, relative to the late conference was, that Ellen felt herſelf too much diſturbed by preſent circumſtances, to be able to ſuſtain the weight of her feelings, without ſome change of ſcene, "and therefore, brother, continued ſhe, we both of us ſhall ſet out very ſhortly, to viſit ſome of our acquaintance;" Fitz Aubin declared his readineſs to acquieſce, in any ſtep which ſhould be for the eaſe of Miſs Ruſhford, and finding he could not ſee her that evening, retired very early to his chamber, much indiſpoſed.

CHAP. VIII.

SCARCELY had the morning dawned on the following day, when the two ladies ſet out in a chaiſe and four. Fitz Aubin having reſted extremely ill that night, found himſelf inclined to ſleep towards the morning, and therefore heard not the ſound of the carriage, neither did he obtain any intelligence of the ladies' departure, till the uſual hour of breakfaſt; he concluded, there was nothing very extraordinary in the circumſtance, after what Henrietta had intimated on the preceding evening, whoſe woman now informed him that her lady was expected to return, on the evening of the following day.

When

When that time arrived, Miſs Fitz Aubin returned, but entirely alone.

"And where have you left Miſs Ruſhford ſiſter?"

She could not ſpeak for tears, but holding out to him a letter ſealed, withdrew inſtantly to her room; with a trembling hand, and a heart foreboding evil, he opened the letter and read as follows:

"I know not whether it be neceſſary to apologize, my dear Henry, for my abrupt departure, ſince the violence I have done myſelf on that occaſion fully equals all which you can feel; I have quitted you, and I truſt for ever; dreadful word! yet I repeat it, *for ever!* I have ſacrificed the deareſt feelings of my ſoul, to the claim of duty, and I call on you to follow me, in the ſame path of ſelf denial, which a ſevere deſtiny injoins to us both; recall that rectitude of ſentiment, which has hitherto governed your conduct, and acquit your-

ſelf of thoſe relative obligations, from which no [illegible] of ſelfiſh gratification can diſcharge you. For my part, the path aſſigned me to [illegible] tho' thorny indeed, is yet a clear one, I could not miſtake; and I have followed its direction, by removing from that once happy aſylum, where now my preſence could only be of the moſt unhappy conſequences, to a family which I have a thouſand motives to love and honour. Attempt not to follow me, for it will be in vain, conſider only what reaſon and virtue call on you to perform, and time will render the practice eaſy. In ſhort, Henry, you muſt renounce me to ſave a father,---a father bowing beneath the weight of age and ſorrow. I do not ſay the reſolution I have taken has coſt me nothing, for that were to prove myſelf ungrateful, for the tenderneſs you have conſtantly ſhewn me, and alſo to be guilty of a falſehood, which I abhor; the ſacrifice has coſt me dear, yet the future peace of an approving conſcience, will in ſome meaſure repay me all.—Let this pure, this ineffable reward be alſo your portion, my

brother,

brother,—my friend;—reſolve to do all which your good mind dictates to be done, and happineſs will be yours;—adieu,—be you happy—to know that you are ſo, will be the higheſt conſolation, which henceforth can be enjoyed by,

ELLEN RUSHFORD.

Fitz Aubin having read the above epiſtle, ran with it haſtily to the apartment of his ſiſter, whom he found in tears; "And was this well done, cruel Henrietta," cried he, in a tranſport of grief and diſpleaſure.

"Upbraid me not, brother, replied ſhe; the part I have been conſtrained to act, has been ſuch as to merit your compaſſion, rather than reſentment.—Ellen Ruſhford is more of an angel, than either you or I could have conceived before;—Heavens! what ſublimity of ſoul;—what virtuous reſolution have I witneſſed;—exalted woman;—why was ſhe not given to bleſs us all?"

"And do you imagine, then, that I will thus reſign her,—no—I ſwear."

"Hold brother I beſeech you; ſhould you reſolve to follow her, you loſe her affection for ever; the only proof you can now give of your love, is to acquieſce in ſilence to her will; no conſideration on earth, could at this time prevail on her to ſee you."

"At this time,—then there may yet be hope."

To this Miſs Fitz Aubin made no reply.

"She has not however forbade you to acquaint me with the place of her retreat?"

"Indeed ſhe has."

"And will you grant nothing then, to the feelings of a brother? are you wholly inſenſible to my miſery, Henrietta?"

"I under-

"I underſtand you, my dear Harry, and believe me, I feel too ſenſibly your preſent anguiſh; give me your honour, that you will not attempt to ſee the ſweet heroine without her permiſſion, and I will inform you whither ſhe is gone."

"I will do ſo,—for whatever it coſt me that angelic woman ſhall be obeyed."

"You are to know, then, that ſome months before your return to Ireland, Ellen and myſelf were on a viſit at Cork, in the courſe of which we became acquainted with a Captain Faulkner, who hearing the name of Ruſhford, recollected a gentleman of that name, whom he had formerly known in India, and from ſtrong circumſtances, could be no other than the father of our dear friend. On this diſcovery he informed her, that he was perſonally acquainted with a lady, who is a near relation of the Ruſhford family; neither Ellen nor myſelf, were led to form any ſanguine expectations from the intelligence; however,

ſhortly

ſhortly after a letter arrived from that very relation, who is it ſeems a widow, of the name of Burton, and firſt couſin to our Ellen's father.—In this epiſtle, the good lady expreſſed a lively ſatisfaction, in having diſcovered the daughter of a relation, for whom ſhe had a profound regard, and warmly ſolicited her to put herſelf under her protection, aſſuring her of a maternal reception.—Ellen returned a polite anſwer to her couſin's epiſtle, but declined the friendly offer, for indeed ſhe was at that time as little inclined to quit our family, as we ſhould have been to part with her;—to this relation however, ſhe is now gone, and I hope a ſhort time will bring us the aſſurance of her ſafe arrival in London. —Now my deareſt brother, let me entreat you to exert your native magnanimity, ſince Ellen's continuance here could only have diſtreſſed her;—time may yet do much,—at leaſt till affairs here aſſume a better aſpect; reſt ſatisfied with the meaſure, and believe that your ſiſter is not the leaſt diſtreſſed of the three."

However

However inimical to the fond wiſhes of her lover, Miſs Ruſhford's unexpected reſolution might have been, he was convinced, on mature reflection, that a temporary ſeparation was really expedient, as well with reſpect to her own tranquillity as that of his father; and as there was no reaſon to conclude, from his ſiſter's diſcourſe, that Ellen had formed any determination, which finally threatened his happineſs, he ſubmitted to the deprivation with a calmneſs, which originated in the latent hopes, his tender and faithful boſom ſtill nouriſhed.—of his father's diſtreſs he was exquiſitely ſenſible; but as he knew that diſtreſs might eaſily be relieved by ſelling the eſtate, to which he had repeatedly expreſſed his entire conſent, he was inclined to ſuſpect a degree of pride or obſtinacy in his father's conduct, which ſomewhat abated the force of thoſe feelings, which a heart glowing with every filial ſentiment, might otherwiſe have indulged; true it was, that nothing was farther from the old gentleman's ideas, than the compromiſing Lord Langby's affair, by a diſpoſal

ſal of the family eſtate; it was a meaſure at which his pride would have ſtumbled; Henry's marriage with Miſs Langby was the only mode, which he deſigned ſhould be adopted, and therefore Miſs Ruſhford's conduct gratified him more, than he choſe his ſon and daughter ſhould underſtand. While therefore he affected to ſpeak, in terms of the higheſt admiration, of that young lady's virtue and merit, he left no methods unemployed, to renew the marriage treaty with the Langby family; mean time the day of payment drew on, in default of which the affairs of this unhappy family muſt inevitably experience a total ruin.—What a ſituation for a ſon, who like Fitz Aubin was endowed, not only with the ſublimeſt ideas of virtue, but poſſeſſed the filial paſſion in its moſt refined degree;—the varying emotions of his ſoul were too exquiſite for expreſſion;—he ſaw a father whom he honoured,—a ſiſter,—brothers, whom he tenderly loved, likely to be expoſed to penury and wretchneſs, and it depended on himſelf to ward off the fatal blow; but could he abandon

his adored Ellen, yes, even that he would have done, had not his lips a thouſand times uttered the fondeſt vows of ardent love; could he then abuſe the ſacred ties of honour,—the engagements of plighted faith,—the conflict was too ſevere,—he ſunk beneath the ſtruggle, and was ſoon reduced to a ſtate of health, which gave the moſt ſerious alarm to his relations.

Henrietta and Ellen having eſtabliſhed an epiſtolary correſpondence, the latter was fully informed of the circumſtances of the family.—Henry's ill health indeed ſhe was not informed of, but the perturbations of his mind ſhe could well ſurmiſe, from the knowledge that his father ſtill remained inexorably bent on his favourite ſcheme, and conſequently ſhe had a very ſenſible idea of the domeſtic unhappineſs ſubſiſting in the family of her beloved benefactors.—What farther effect theſe painful reflections had on her conduct, will ſhortly appear, for we muſt now leave the Fitz Aubins, in order to attend this young lady on her arrival in England.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

MRS. Burton was a widow of about fifty years of age, poſſeſſed of a handſome fortune at her own diſpoſal, free from any incumbrance and without children;—her uſual reſidence was in an elegant villa, which ſhe built near Richmond, where ſhe lived in happy independance, bleſt with good health, a cheerful diſpoſition, and a large circle of genteel acquaintance; ſhe was certainly a very pleaſing woman, polite, affable and ſincere, and without oſtentation, endowed

ed with one of the beſt hearts in the world; —her reception of Miſs Ruſhford, was juſt the one which might be expected, from the above conciſe ſketch of her character;—with a generous emotion, which nobly ſpurned the frigid rules of etiquette, ſhe threw her arms around her, and exclaimed, "Am I then ſo happy, as to embrace the daughter of Edward Ruſhford,—and ſuch a daughter too,—what a pleaſure have I ſo long been deprived of;—welcome my ſweet couſin, moſt welcome to me, for gladly ſhall I teſtify my eſteem of your dear father, by the tendereſt regards to yourſelf;—you ſhall be my adopted child, and what greater happineſs can I deſire."

Overcome by a tenderneſs infinitely ſoothing to her agitated mind, and far beyond expectation, Ellen could only reply by a flood of grateful tears; Mrs. Burton obſerved the flurry of her ſpirits, and rightly judging a little repoſe to be neceſſary, attended her to her apartment, where every thing was previouſly contrived,

contrived, to induce the fair ſtranger to feel herſelf already at home.

On entering the breakfaſt parlour next morning, ſhe found Captain Faulkner there, —Mrs. Burton, after making her the compliments of the morning, obligingly ſaid, "This my dear couſin is the worthy gentleman, to whom I am ſo greatly obliged for the happineſs of your acquaintance." The Captain politely bowed, and ſurveying Miſs Ruſhford with an air of mingled tenderneſs and concern, expreſſed his uneaſineſs at her pale and altered countenance, to which ſhe replied, that he ſeemed to have forgot the long fatiguing journey ſhe had juſt performed, "I will hope then Madam, he reſumed, that a few days will reſtore that charming glow of health, which ſmiled on your cheeks, when I had the honour of ſeeing you in Ireland, as well as that happy flow of ſpirits, which then enlivened every circle, which you favoured with your preſence."—

This

This obſervation kindled a deep bluſh in the young lady's cheeks, from the conſciouſneſs probably, of there being too tender a cauſe for the Captain's remark.—Mrs. Burton kindly hoped, that a little time would ſet all right, and added, "You and I, Captain, muſt exert our endeavours to amuſe my amiable couſin, and I truſt we ſhall prove ſucceſsful."

"Did it depend on my endeavours, Madam, ſaid he, Miſs Ruſhford would poſſeſs every bleſſing the world could afford."

Captain Faulkner was, it ſeems, ſo much ſtruck with the viſible change in Miſs Ruſhford's looks and manner, as to be perſuaded there was ſomething more in it than mere fatigue, and Mrs. Burton herſelf, finding a penſiveneſs hanging about her, in ſpite of every effort to eradicate it, was at length of the ſame opinion;—neither policy or veracity could approve, the keeping any ſecret from the knowledge of ſo generous and friend-

ly

ly a relation; Ellen therefore, was ſoon induced to acquaint her good couſin, with all the particulars of her life, and in return received the ſympathy of a ſincere and feeling heart. "I revere, ſaid Mrs. Burton, the memory of your beneſactreſs, the late Mrs. Fitz Aubin, and feel myſelf impelled to love the amiable Henrietta;—but notwithſtanding the favourable gloſs, which I doubt not your gratitude has prompted you, to put on the conduct of Mr. Fitz Aubin, I cannot but think him extremely culpable; how ungenerous was it to connive at the growing tenderneſs between you and his ſon, if he meant at laſt to with-hold his conſent; in ſuch a conduct I diſcover both levity and cruelty."

"Conſider, dear Madam, the poor old gentleman's preſent diſtreſſing embarraſſment."

"As the conſequence of his own folly I do;—but are theſe conſequences to be redreſſed, at the expence of other people's happineſs; thoſe

thoſe people too the dependants on his virtue and tenderneſs, for every moral and ſocial good; fye upon it,—couſin Ellen, I ſuſpect you are in ſome meaſure, blinded by your love and gratitude to this family, otherwiſe your diſcernment muſt have convinced you, that Mr. Fitz Aubin's preſent unjuſt conduct is more the reſult of pride than neceſſity."

"Pardon me, my dear Madam, I cannot allow this."

"Why my dearſt gi l, will you ſtill look thro' a falſe medium?—have you not told me that your Henry has offered his father the liberty of cutting off the entailment from the eſtate?—here is then a remedy adequate to the diſtreſs of the family;—but the old gentleman will not cloſe with the offer; it is therefore, clear to me at leaſt, that he is more inclined to an alliance, with a title, than the poor friendleſs girl, who has neither family nor fortune to allure him;—and yet my love,

the

the daughter of Edward Ruſhford, is no way inferior to the Fitz Aubins."

Ellen perceived that the good lady, had ſomething of family pride lurking at the bottom of her heart, which felt hurt at the idea of an indignity offered to a relation, and therefore attempted not to combat her opinion, otherwiſe than by taking every proper opportunity of expreſſing her obligations to that family. Mrs. Burton readily acknowledged herſelf diſpoſed to love them, for their former generoſity and kindneſs to her dear couſin, but always concluded with declaring, that in her eſtimation, the recent conduct of Mr. Fitz Aubin had cancelled every obligation.

"I reckon it the greateſt misfortune of my life, ſaid ſhe one day, that I happened not to be in England, at the time of your father's marriage, nor till it was too late to be of any ſervice; the firſt intelligence which met me on my return, was, that your dear mother had

ſailed

ſailed for the Indies, a ſhort time before your father's death was publickly known. I have made every poſſible inquiry reſpecting her fate, and that of the infant ſhe carried with her, but could learn nothing on the ſubject, —little did I imagine that my Ellen ſtill exiſted in the ſiſter kingdom."

Could Miſs Ruſhford have baniſhed the painful remembrance of what had befallen her in that ſiſter kingdom, ſhe might ſtill have been happy; but as ſhe was unable to ſuppreſs the bitter recollection of ſcenes, which once had been ſo dear, it was morally impoſſible for her to be ſo, notwithſtanding the thouſand friendly attentions, daily paid her by her generous friend. Yet, convinced of the neceſſity of the meaſure, ſhe was firmly reſolved to give up Fitz Aubin for ever; and it was now the earneſt wiſh of her heart, to hear that he was united to Miſs Langby,—but of ſuch an event, the letters ſhe conſtantly received from her beloved Henrietta gave no probable view; by theſe

ſhe underſtood that Henry, ſtill urged by his father, obſtinately held out, againſt every argument or entreaty; that the Langby's were inveterate; in ſhort, that unleſs ſomething could be done ſpeedily to prevent it, the ruin of the whole family was inevitable. Under the weight of theſe ideas, ſhe found the only poſſible alleviation of her diſtreſs, in the confidence of Mrs. Burton, who knew how to pity and ſooth a tender and afflicted heart, and every hour invented ſome ſcheme of amuſement, with a view to diſſipate the melancholy, which in ſpite of every oppoſite reſolution, ſtill ſat on the countenance of her fair couſin.

Mrs. Burton ſaw a good deal of company, but the chief on the liſt of her particular intimates, was Captain Faulkner, whom ſhe juſtly eſteemed as a worthy man, and moſt valuable friend. Tho' accuſtomed to a nautical life, he had a heart ever open to the diſtreſſes of others, and it is certain that he ſeemed to conſider that of Miſs Ruſhford's with particular ſenſibility. There was a tenderneſs in

his manner whenever he addreſſed her, which rendered him an intereſting companion, and tho' many years older than herſelf, (for he was not leſs than forty) ſhe really was much pleaſed with his ſociety;—he had formerly ſeen her father in India, and therefore was enabled to converſe on a topic, which could not fail to intereſt her attention; he would often tell her that her features, were the ſoftened reſemblance of thoſe of her father, and ſhe certainly received it, as the moſt pleaſing compliment he could pay to her perſon.

It ſhould be obſerved, that Miſs Ruſhford on parting from her beloved Henrietta, had forborne to wound her ſiſterly feelings, by owning her reſolution never to become the wife of Fitz Aubin: yet ſuch a reſolution ſhe had actually formed at that time, and ſucceeding reflection had tended finally to enforce it. Her laſt letter to Miſs Fitz Aubin, had fully expreſſed the ſentiments ſhe had adopted; but her motives of action, will be

beſt explained by an extract, which we ſhall here ſubjoin from that letter,—"Dreading the "inſtability of my reſolves, when oppoſed by "the pleadings of a friend, a ſiſter, ſo pre-"cious to my ſoul as my Henrietta, I for-"bore to hint the determination of my mind; "but it is time for all our ſakes, you ſhould be "acquainted with it. Know then my beloved "friend, that I have reſolved to renounce all "which on earth is eſſential to my felicity; "I renounce Fitz Aubin for ever; aſk not "how dear the ſacrifice has coſt me, but ra-"ther ſuffer me to tell you the motives of a "reſolution, which has afflicted me far more "than it is here expedient to mention. Recol-"lect my Henrietta, that I ſaw the venerable "man, who took me a wretched orphan to his "boſom,—your honoured father,—the father "of my Henry,—and let me add, the father "alſo of my friendleſs youth,—this friend, "this benefactor I ſaw kneeling at my feet, "in piteous accents imploring me, to ſave his "hoary age from miſery,—his children from "deſtruction,—and ſhall I, from a ſelfiſh re-

"gard,

"gard, be deaf to the ſolemn requiſition,—
"virtue, honour forbid it; no, my Henrietta,
"your Ellen may, nay, ſhe muſt be un-
"happy, but ſhe will not be baſe; ſhe will
"not return the thouſand obligations ſhe
"owes to your dear family, by involving
"them all in miſery, and therefore ſhe re-
"ſolves never to be the wife of Henry Fitz
"Aubin."

As Henrietta in obedience to Ellen's expreſs injunction, had communicated this reſolution to her brother, the letter ſhe diſpatched in conſequence thereof, conveyed ſuch intelligence as rendered Ellen exquiſitely miſerable; ſo far were affairs from receiving redreſs by the meaſure, that Fitz Aubin agitated almoſt to diſtraction, had ſolemnly vowed never to marry, as long as the miſtreſs of his ſoul remained ſingle;—over this diſtreſſing epiſtle Miſs Ruſhford was penſively reclining, when Mrs. Burton entered her dreſſing room, and having been informed of the contents, (for there exiſted no reſerve on either ſide) ſaid,

"Your magnanimity then, my love, has hitherto proved ineffectual,—to what purpoſe ſhould you longer maintain a reſolution, which coſts both yourſelf and your lover ſo dear,—were it not better to obey the dictates of your mutual affection at once, as you ſay he propoſes to reſign all property for the benefit of his family."

"Ah, my dear Madam, cried Ellen, and can you then think ſo meanly of me as, that, I would ſuffer Fitz Aubin to reduce himſelf to beggary on my account,—what a return would this be, for the favours I have all my life time received from that family: No Madam, ſince both honour and gratitude now forbid our union, never,—never will I be the wife of Henry,—tho' the reſolution coſts me I own, the whole of my earthly happineſs."

"Noble,—generous girl,—how I admire your ſentiments,—forgive me, if I meant only to try the ſtrength of that reſolution, and ſince I find it ſo firmly rooted, I will ven-

ture

ture to touch on a ſubject I have much at heart."

Miſs Ruſhford looked all attention, and Mrs. Burton with more ſolemnity in her air than was uſual, thus went on,—"The triumph of your generoſity muſt, you ſee Ellen, be incomplete, unleſs Fitz Aubin could be brought to the ſame point, of ſelf-denial with yourſelf, and to accompliſh this there appears to me, to be one ſtep farther for you to aſcend in the ſcale of heroiſm,—in ſhort my dear, you muſt fix on ſome worthy man to beſtow your hand on."

"Impoſſible,—place my affections on another object,—do you know ſo little of my heart, Madam, as to believe me capable of this?"

"Not immediately,—and perhaps you never will feel an equal ardour of affection;

but Ellen, your condition in life, as a handſome young creature, without relations or friendly connections to patronize and protect you, render it really neceſſary that you ſhould marry at ſome time; now if you can meet with a worthy ſenſible man, who knew how to prize your merit, without pretending to thoſe high-raiſed feelings which enthuſiaſtic lovers dwell on."

"Were it poſſible, my dear Madam, I could ever think of marrying at all, I confeſs you have deſcribed the character I ſhould chuſe."

"Then my Ellen, exactly ſuch a perſon I now recommend to you in Captain Faulkner."

"Surely, (with a look of aſtoniſhment and diſpleaſure) my couſin, is pleaſed to divert herſelf a little at my expence."

"Very

"Very far from it,—I never was more ſerious; Captain Faulkner is a gentleman of a fine underſtanding, and an excellent heart; agreeable in his perſon, and of an age, when the paſſions are modulated by the dictates of reaſon; he loves you with ſincerity, without any of thoſe romantic ideas of the paſſions, which in the preſent ſtate of things, I am perſuaded would diſguſt you."

"Let me entreat you, dear Madam, to drop the ſubject."

"Rather you muſt give me leave to relate a converſation, which I have lately had with that gentleman; you muſt forgive me, if under the conviction of his ſingular merit, I have thought it no breach either of prudence or friendſhip, to acquaint him of the real ſtate of your affairs. Your ſtory tenderly affected him, and after a little pauſe, he replied, "How much do I admire the conduct and character of your charming couſin,

Madam,—in my idea ſhe is the firſt of women, and I feel the tender eſteem I have long had for her, augmented to admiration; —in ſhort Madam, you behold in me the lover of Miſs Ruſhford, one who if not ſo ardent, at leaſt is as ſincere, as the gentleman who poſſeſſes her tendereſt affections.—I lament thoſe circumſtances which forbid their union, and I alſo am perſuaded that Miſs Ruſhford's tranquillity, is only to be reſtored by transferring her affections to another object. I have not the vanity to ſuppoſe myſelf capable, to effect a complete transfer of that affection, but it is poſſible that by a ſeries of ſincere eſteem and attention, I might excite that degree of regard in her breaſt, in which my own heart would find its happineſs. I am conſcious of the diſparity of our years, yet in offering myſelf to that lady, I flatter myſelf I am influenced, by a regard to her happineſs equally with that of myſelf, —perſuaded as I am, that the conſtant affection of an honeſt heart, muſt inſpire a mind

like

like her's, with every requiſite ſentiment to the forming a rational and permanent happineſs." I was ſo much amazed, continued Mrs. Burton, at the Captain's diſcourſe, that at firſt, I knew not what anſwer to make, at laſt I expreſſed my ſurpriſe at the nature of his ſpeech, and plainly told him, that the world would ſuſpect his ſanity, ſhould he be known to offer his addreſſes to a lady, who to his own knowledge was paſſionately in love with another.

"No matter for that, he reſumed, I never ſuffer my friends to deſcribe the terms of my happineſs, and ſuch is my opinion of Miſs Ruſhford, that were ſhe to conſent to favour my ſuit, attached as ſhe is to another, I am perſuaded ſhe would not be ſatisfied, till ſhe had eſtabliſhed her own happineſs as well as mine," And now my Ellen, what reply have you to make me."

"Not a ſyllable, Madam, but that I entreat, you will never more reſume a ſubject, which I cannot liſten to without pain."

"I cannot promise never to resume it, said Mrs. Burton, but at present am ready at your desire to drop it."

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

SOME few weeks elapſed, during which Mrs. Burton avoided any renewal of the ſubject, which concludes the laſt chapter. Captain Faulkner was daily a viſitant at the houſe, and his behaviour to Miſs Ruſhford was ſo uniformly tender, reſpectful and ſympathetic, that ſhe could not but entertain for him, that kind of eſteem which a perſon naturally feels towards another, who manifeſts an intereſt in her happineſs. There was withal, a delicacy in his manners which pleaſed her, and his chuſing rather to merit her eſteem by ſilent conſtant aſſiduity, than by explicit

explicit importunity, obtained for him, exactly the ſentiment he aſpired to;—that is to ſay, her friendſhip.—Meantime accounts from Ireland, repreſented the affairs of the Fitz Aubin family, as rapidly approaching to a dreadful criſis; Henry obſtinately perſevered in a ſullen contempt of the Langbys, and an apparent inſenſibility of either his father's menaces or entreaties, and the amiable Henrietta, ſinking beneath the painful conflicts, of affection to her father, and tenderneſs to her brother and friend.

At length on the receipt of a letter, which as uſual threw Miſs Ruſhford into a paroxyſm of anguiſh, Mrs. Burton ventured once more to renew the ſubject, "My dearſt girl, ſaid ſhe, can I bear to ſee you thus a prey to miſery, which promiſes no termination.—Things neither can nor ſhall go on thus; reſolve to ſecure your own happineſs and that of Fitz Aubin, and for the old gentleman, leave him to reap the fruits of his folly."

"Heaven

"Heaven forbid, replied ſhe warmly, that I ſhould be capable, of ſo baſe and ungenerous a conduct.—I will not purchaſe happineſs at the expence of his, whoſe home was my aſylum;—whoſe fortune ſupported me; and whoſe paternal kindneſs was the joy of my youth,—ſhall it be ſaid, that the child he nurtured in his boſom, deſtroyed the comfort of his age,—Oh, never, never!"

"Then, why not reſolve to reſtore his comforts?"

"And can there be a thing on earth Madam, which I would heſitate to do, to that end."

"Yes, there is a ſomething which you heſitate to do, which by convincing the young man, that you *could* not be his wife, would leave him at liberty to act, for the benefit of his family."

"I com-

"I comprehend you Madam,—you would then adviſe me to marry Captain Faulkner."

"Moſt certainly, I do,—could there be a ſtep more eligible to one in your ſituation, —the advantage of the Fitz Aubin family would be promoted, by the ſame meaſure, which offers tranquillity and protection to yourſelf.—In a word, if you really wiſh to ſecure the happineſs of the Fitz Aubin family, you muſt marry,—and in that caſe, where can you expect to meet with an object, ſo deſerving your preference as Captain Faulkner."

Miſs Ruſhford made no reply, and Mrs. Burton perceiving that ſhe had nearly carried her point, reſumed the argument with ſo much vivacity and ſtrength of reaſoning, that at length the young lady gave a tacit conſent. —She clearly perceived the neceſſity of confirming the tender ſacrifice, ſhe had already made, by another;—but ſince circumſtances had rendered marriage expedient on her part,

it

it was clear that Captain Faulkner was of all others, the man moſt proper to be choſen.—That ſame evening he was introduced as the avowed lover of Miſs Ruſhford, and met with a reception agreeable to his wiſhes;—without pretending to the raptures of love, he was moſt happy in the permiſſion of addreſſing her, for ſo perfectly was he ſatisfied of the purity and rectitude of her heart, as to be aſſured that in obtaining her hand, he ſhould poſſeſs every thing requiſite, to that plan of rational felicity, and refined friendſhip, which he had propoſed, both to himſelf and her, by the union.

The converſation which then paſſed between them was ſhort, for Ellen was impatient to retire to her room, there to vent in ſecret, the overflowings of a diſtreſſed, and feeling heart; nor could Mrs. Burton's applauſes, tho' expreſſed in the warmeſt ſtyle of panegyric, ſuppreſs the anguiſh ſhe ſecretly endured; but ſhe had accepted the Captain, and from that ſtep there was no receding,

ing,—neither indeed, on the whole did ſhe wiſh it;—both reaſon and virtue approved the meaſure, and her grand point was now to reconcile herſelf to the new character, in which ſhe was ſhortly to appear.—Feeling no inclination to ſleep, ſhe took up her pen, and poured out the effuſions of her ſoul, to her beloved Henrietta,—the letter which ſhe then wrote concluded with theſe words, "This my beloved friend, is probably the laſt time that I ſhall have it in my power, without a degree of criminalty, to mention the name of Henry with tenderneſs;—no, not even to you, my other ſelf, muſt I be allowed it; I hope he will be happy, and that he will tread the path, which honour and filial duty mark out for him; yet had he been diſpoſed to have done this,—the ſacrifice I am about to make had not been neceſſary. Henrietta, why did your excellent mother preſerve a being, deſtined to ſo much miſery, as Ellen too ſurely is;—but what have I ſaid,—I recall the expreſſion,—I am not miſerable,—I will not be ſo,—to act agreeable to the dictates of rectitude is to be happy."

This letter when it arrived in Ireland, Miſs Fitz Aubin wiſhed to have concealed from her brother;—but he found her one day weeping over it, and knowing too well the hand, to behave with cold politeneſs on the occaſion, he inſiſted on being made acquainted with its contents,—what the effects of ſuch diſcovery were, will appear in the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

AS Mrs. Burton really believed, that in propoſing Captain Faulkner to her couſin, ſhe had regarded her beſt intereſts; and, as ſhe moreover knew, that tranquillity could never be reſtored to her boſom, till her thoughts were directed to a new ſubject, it will appear extremely natural, if we find Mrs. Burton accelerating the marriage by every poſſible means. Ellen on this occaſion conducted herſelf with the frankneſs, which ever made part of her character; in conſequence of which the Captain had permiſſion, to haſten the neceſſary

neceſſary preparations;—Mrs. Burton propoſed to preſent her with five thouſand pounds on the day of marriage, and to ſettle the remainder of her fortune on her, at her deceaſe; but theſe generous overtures he peremptorily declined, "My own fortune Madam, ſaid he, is large, and I muſt not be deprived of the opportunity, of convincing Miſs Ruſhford, that I think every thing valuable compriſed in herſelf alone." The lawyers were ordered to be as expeditious as poſſible, in preparing a ſettlement, which demonſtrated his principles to be as liberal as was his fortune.

Things were in this ſtate of forwardneſs, when Miſs Ruſhford ſitting one morning alone at the harpſichord, beheld a pale emaciated figure ruſh into the room, whoſe air and aſpect beſpoke the wretchedneſs of inſanity;—ſhe inſtantly uttered a loud ſcream, and ſtarted from her chair.

"I,

"Is then the ſight of the once happy Fitz Aubin, already horrible to his Ellen's eye?"

The hollow tone of his voice, added to the ravage which ſickneſs and grief had made, on his late lovely countenance, chilled her whole ſoul;—ſhe claſped her hands in ſilent agony, and flinging herſelf half lifeleſs into a chair, burſt into a violent flood of tears.

"I come not, reſumed Fitz Aubin, to diſtreſs you,—fear not my reproaches, for I ſhall make none; but I came in order to grace the triumph of your infidelity, by attending on your nuptials.—Yes, Ellen, in that feſtive hour, you ſhall have the glory to behold, the victim of your inconſtancy, and with proud diſdain may point him out to his happy rival; yet ſhall theſe cold lips bleſs you even in death, and my laſt ſigh ſhall breathe a prayer for your felicity."

At that moment Mrs. Burton entered the room, but her emotions may be better conceived

ceived than expreſſed, when ſhe beheld the death like figure of Fitz Aubin, and her couſin reclining motionleſs on a chair, for by this time a fainting fit, had rendered her inſenſible to the object before her.—Glancing her eye around with a mixture of ſurpriſe and terror, Mrs. Burton exclaimed, "What do I ſee,—and who ſir are you, that thus intrude?"

"One, anſwered he, whom the infidelity of that lady, has doomed to miſery and to death."

"Ah then, I begin to comprehend ſomething of the preſent ſcene,—poor unfortunate young man, I pity you."

Mrs. Burton having rung for aſſiſtance, a ſervant now appeared, and Miſs Ruſhford being conveyed to the next apartment, for the benefit of air, ſhe continued thus:

"Your name, I preſume ſir, is Fitz Aubin,

Aubin,—alas! why did you meditate a viſit, which muſt prove in the laſt degree diſtreſſing to you both?"

She then roſe to attend her couſin in the next apartment,—Henry alſo aroſe and followed.

"Forbear, cried ſhe, I entreat,—indeed you muſt not ſee Miſs Ruſhford again."

"Not ſee her,—and who ſhall prevent me?—is ſhe not mine?—I tell you Madam, ſhe is mine by ſuch ties as the world cannot diſſolve."

Mrs. Burton, both grieved and vexed, turned back and ſat down, "Would you be calm a moment Fitz Aubin, we might diſcuſs this unhappy affair."

"I am calm Madam,—what have you to urge?"

"That

"That my couſin, ſir, as the only expedient to ſecure your advantage, and her own tranquillity, has reſolved to accept the hand of a very worthy gentleman."

"Let me but hear a confirmation of this from her own lips, and I ſhall be ſatisfied."

"Will you promiſe to be ſatisfied,—and you ſhall ſee her."

She then led him to the next room where Miſs Ruſhford ſat, recovered indeed from her fainting, but plunged into the bittereſt abyſs of anguiſh.

"My dear, ſaid Mrs. Burton, this poor young gentleman promiſes to be ſatisfied, provided he hear your reſolution of marrying the Captain from yourſelf.

"Then be ſatisfied, anſwered ſhe with quivering lips and eyes tenderly turned on Fitz Aubin, be ſatisfied my dear Henry,—

and oh! that you would be alſo happy, in purſuing the path which virtue dictates."

"Is it poſſible, cried he, ſurveying her with a look of unutterable anguiſh, O! Ellen, ſooner had I doubted my own exiſtence than thy truth;—but know you yet are mine, and he who ſhall obtain your hand, muſt do it through this heart."

With theſe words he turned himſelf with a furious air, and ran wildly out of the houſe, leaving Mrs. Burton in a condition of terror hardly to be deſcribed; as for Miſs Ruſhford ſhe appeared ſo abſorbed in grief, as not to have noticed the dreadful menace he had uttered, and apparently inſenſible to all around, was conveyed up ſtairs to her apartment.

Meantime the unhappy lover, without knowing whither he was going, had wandered into Richmond Park; under one of the trees ſat a gentleman, in whoſe perſon, had he been atten-

attentive to external objects, he would have recognized Mr. Henderſon, (the ſame who doubtleſs the reader remembers, was mentioned in the firſt chapter) but Fitz Aubin ſaw him not;—the old gentleman however recollected him, altered as was his perſon, from what it had been at the former interview, and going up to him ſaid, while he ſhook him by the hand.

"I am glad to ſee you, ſir,—tho' I fear you have not enjoyed good health, ſince we ſaw each other."

Fitz Aubin could no longer be at a loſs, to remember the ſtranger, with whoſe converſation he had formerly been ſo much delighted, and replied, in a ſtrain of equal politeneſs; they walked on ſome paces together, when Mr. Henderſon ſaid:

"Surely you are not yourſelf now, or were not when we met at B——; is this ſadneſs

uſual to you my young friend, or does it ariſe from ſome recent cauſe?"

There was ſomething ſo extremely intereſting in the manner of this old gentleman, which together with the relief the unhappy generally experience, in opening the ſubject of their ſorrows, that induced Fitz Aubin frankly to ſtate his preſent circumſtances, in doing which it was neceſſary, he ſhould revert to the affairs of his family.—Mr. Henderſon heard the whole without interrupting the ſpeaker, and then calmly replied, "I confeſs the circumſtances you have related are unpleaſant, but I would aſk, does your preſent agitation of mind proceed from an unwillingneſs to act up to the dictates of reaſon?"

"Very far from this,—did it depend on myſelf, I would obey the dictates of reaſon immediately."

"Rather ſay, of the paſſions, (ſmiling) I find

find you have not conſulted reaſon at all, or you would leave this incomparable young woman, whomſoever ſhe be, to purſue a line of conduct which you ought to imitate and admire."

"You would have me then calmly give her up, and marry the woman my father ſelects for me."

"Beyond a doubt you ſhould do thus."

"Perhaps, ſir, you are yourſelf a father; hence therefore ſo prepoſterous a concluſion."

"Would I had that happineſs, (ſighing) no, your inference is unjuſt, I am not contending for parental caprice."

"What then can it be."

"Social obligation, ſir,—do you imagine you live for yourſelf alone."

"Surely no,—but as all mankind are bound by the ſame natural compact, has a father a right, merely for the indulgence of ſome ſelfiſh idea, to render a child miſerable for life."

"By your own account the caſe differs from this, the welfare of a whole family, is connected with that of your father on this occaſion,—is it agreeable to ſocial order, that many are to be made wretched by the vice or folly of one?—the paſſion you entertain for a young woman, who appears eminently deſerving it, is laudable in itſelf, nevertheleſs you cannot gratify it without being greatly culpable."

"What a paradox is this ſir."

"I will explain myſelf in a moment,—do you not perceive my friend, that by a concurrence of circumſtances, the hopes of a whole family are made to concentre in your-

ſelf,—which being the caſe, you are called on to forego the intereſts of ſelf, in conſideration of ſocial good;—the caſe I own is a hard one, nevertheleſs I muſt not diſſemble, for ſo it is, and you cannot as a good member of ſociety reſiſt the obligation."

"This is a piece of philoſophy I never conſidered before,—is it a crime to purſue happineſs,—to indulge the innocent, nay virtuous, propenſities of our nature?"

"By no means, when thoſe purſuits infringe not the general good,—whenever it do, 'tis virtue to reſiſt the paſſions, however innocent in themſelves, ſince the beſt intereſts of man are not of a ſelfiſh but a ſocial nature, and his happineſs will ultimately be found to be moſt pure, when moſt remote from ſelfiſh regard.—The argument admits of a perſonal application, for, except I ſuppoſe you to be (which indeed I do not) totally loſt to every noble feeling, it is impoſſible to

imagine you could be happy, even in the deſired union, as long as you were haunted by the bitter reflection, that for the ſake of your ſelfiſh enjoyments, you had condemned father, ſiſter, and brothers, to indigence:—I rather believe, that you would be capable of finding more ſublime ſatisfaction in marriage, with the woman whom you do not love, when every ſecret diſplacency ſhall be loſt in the elevating reflection, that many were made happy, by the ſacrifice you had made of ſelf gratification.—I ſee you are a little touched by this idea, continued Mr. Henderſon, which convinces me, I were not miſtaken in my eſtimate of your principle; ſuffer me therefore to purſue the ſubject. The grand ſpring of all our virtues, my dear friend, is unqueſtionably the noble principle of ſocial love;—hence, in a more confined ſenſe, reſult all the tender charities of human life;—but in ſuperior ſouls, the ſublime principle expands into thoſe godlike qualities, we call philanthropy, and univerſal bevenolence,—

ſuch

ſuch a ſoul knows nothing of ſelfiſh happineſs, —it annihilates private regard, in the enlarged view of general happineſs,—call to remembrance thoſe exalted characters, who ſtand foremoſt in the page of hiſtory, as the benefactors of mankind,—illuſtrious men, who voluntarily ſheded their blood, to promote the welfare of their country,—of unborn millions."

"Oh, ſir, cried Fitz Aubin, you have indeed ſhamed my grovelling paſſion,—I feel my own abject littleneſs."

"Then ſoar above it my friend,—prefer not the character of a Mark Anthony, to that of a Brutus,—nor longer hold yourſelf the ſlave of an attachment, which makes havock of every noble ſentiment.—The character of your heroine charms me, and will you ſuffer yourſelf to be outdone in generoſity, and fortitude by a feeble girl?—I can aſſure you I ſhould eſteem it a peculiar felicity, to have

an opportunity of perſonally paying a tribute of admiration, to that exalted young lady."

"Accompany me then my good monitor, your preſence will invigorate my yet feeble virtue."

"This I cannot do, anſwered Mr. Henderſon, for I ſhall to-morrow morning ſet out for Dover, on my way to the continent; —but ſometime I will hope to enjoy that pleaſure,—at preſent, I entreat you will paſs this evening with me at the hotel, where I lodge, and I truſt we ſhall part more endeared to each other than ever."

Fitz Aubin very readily cloſed with the good old gentleman's invitation,—they ſat up together till the night was pretty far advanced, during which time the latter had opportunity to enforce his arguments ſo ſucceſsfully, as to excite in the breaſt of his companion, ſentiments of a very different

kind to thoſe, which he had long indulged, ſo fatally to his repoſe.—Mr. Henderſon, attended by only one ſervant, departed on the following morning for Dover, and Fitz Aubin, after devoting ſome time to private meditation, reſolved to ſolicit one more interview with Miſs Ruſhford.

CHAP. XII.

ON reaching Mrs. Burton's houſe, he was uſhered into the parlour, where that lady happened to be alone;—ſhe was moſt agreeably ſurpriſed to ſee him enter, with a compoſed air and a countenance, which tho' penſive, indicated nothing of that inward perturbation, ſhe had witneſſed the evening before;—ſhe politely deſired him to be ſeated, and he then enquired if he might not be favoured, with an interview with Miſs Ruſhford.

"If

"If you would take a friend's advice, anſwered Mrs. Burton, do not perſiſt in deſiring it,—why would you wiſh to augment your mutual diſtreſs?"

"It is rather to alleviate it, Madam, I am induced to the requeſt,—ſince I hope I have now acquired ſufficient reſolution, to act in a manner more conſiſtent with the ſevere deſtiny aſſigned me, and I mean to convince my noble Ellen, that tho' I be forbid to indulge the fond hope of calling her mine, I can at leaſt act worthy of her eſteem."

"Why this is talking as you ought to do, returned the lady, greatly relieved; on ſuch terms, my couſin cannot object to the interview you deſire."

She immediately went to Miſs Ruſhford's apartment, and by proper diſcourſe prepared her to ſee him once more;—ſhe could not however forbear to ſay, that Fitz Aubin was really a charming fellow, "But the

greater

greater the ſacrifice, the more exalted the merit you know my dear," added ſhe with a ſmile.—On her entering the room Fitz Aubin aroſe, and viſibly repreſſing the emotions of his ſoul, led the young lady to a chair, with the air of a cordial friend, rather than that of a lover.—Mrs. Burton withdrew and a converſation then enſued, which afforded Miſs Ruſhford a ſatisfaction ſhe had long been a ſtranger to,—without entering on the particulars of the tête-à-tête it muſt ſuffice to ſay, that ſhe found her Henry as much of a philoſopher as ſhe could wiſh;—ſubmitting to the exigency of affairs, he ſolemnly reſigned all he held dear or valuable on earth, and with manly reſolution, avowed his intention of acquieſcing in the will of his father, by marrying Miſs Langby.—Tho' theſe topics could not be diſcuſſed by two perſons thus circumſtanced, without exciting a tumult of indeſcribable emotions in their reſpective boſoms, yet, they mutually endeavoured to conceal, their feelings from each other, and Miſs Ruſhford, the more effectually to evince her

own

own ſatisfaction, as well as to promote his, began to ſpeak of the lady it was decreed he ſhould marry, in terms of reſpect; to which he anſwered,—"I hope indeed my Ellen, Miſs Langby has ſome good qualities, and I promiſe you, I ſhall diligently apply myſelf to diſcover them, in order to fix a ground for that eſteem, which is the only ſentiment I can ever entertain for any woman, beſide yourſelf;—were ſhe an angel ſhe could never ſupply the vacuum, which ever muſt remain in my heart."——

"I am ſo well aſſured of your intrinſic merit, Henry, replied Miſs Ruſhford, as to entertain no ſhadow of doubt, but that you will conſcientiouſly acquit yourſelf, of whatever virtue and honour ſhall require of you."

"The heart which has been accuſtomed to dwell on your image Ellen, cannot be totally a baſe one; and if I be incapable of feeling for another, thoſe ſentiments which you only, could inſpire, I truſt I ſhall ſo vigilantly

gilantly guard my conduct, as to leave the lady no room to complain of my inſenſibility of the honour ſhe confers on me, by her choice;—but where my tendereſt affections have been centred ſince the dawn of reaſon, there I feel, that in ſpite of argument, or effort, they will ever be invariably fixed."

Mrs. Burton here broke in on their diſcourſe, and was extremely gratified in obſerving an air of compoſure in both, which indicated all ſhe anxiouſly wiſhed.—At Fitz Aubin's deſire Captain Faulkner was introduced to him, and received with the cordiality of a brother;—nothing could be more friendly than was the behaviour of both gentlemen; they diſcovered a thouſand good qualities in each other, and mutually expreſſed the wiſh, of improving the acquaintance to a permanent friendſhip, "You will not queſtion my ſincerity, I hope my dear ſir, ſaid Fitz Aubin, tho' probably you may my fortitude, but it is however a conſolation to me, that your own feelings will compel you

to

to make a candid allowance for mine, on the preſent occaſion."

The Captain took his hand and really wept,—"I could almoſt wiſh your happineſs, cried he, at the expence of my own;—however, in making the moſt grateful returns, to the honour this dear lady confers on me, allow me to ſay, I will conſider myſelf urged by the additional motive, of poſſeſſing an ineſtimable treaſure, committed to my tendereſt care, by a gentleman whom I both pity and admire."

There was not a dry eye in the room, at this intereſting period; the remainder of the day however, was paſſed in the moſt ſocial manner, and Henry, who had appointed the next morning for his departure, was prevailed on by Mrs. Burton and the Captain, to allot two days more to his continuance at Richmond.

"I am but too ready to comply with your

your kind requeſt, my friends, anſwered he, but indeed (ſighing) you ought not to have put my fortitude to a longer trial."

Prophetic ſentiment,—tis certain the invitation was an injudicious one,—but it was accepted, and the event too clearly demonſtrated, the fallibility of human virtue.

That ſame evening Fitz Aubin took leave of Miſs Ruſhford, with the chaſted reverence of a friend, and even at parting, reſigned her hand to Captain Faulkner;—part of the following day was paſſed in the ſame manner;—Captain Faulkner was obliged to go to town after dinner, and was not expected to return before the following day;—the ſummer was in its prime, and the ſun, having withdrawn its ardent beams, a walk in the pleaſant garden, which joined to the houſe, was doubtleſs the moſt eligible recreation the ſeaſon afforded.—Fitz Aubin attended the two ladies thither, and they had juſt reached the entrance of an alcove, ſhaded on every ſide

ſide by flowering ſhrubs, when Mrs. Burton was haſtily called into the houſe, to attend a perſon on ſome buſineſs.—Miſs Ruſhford ſuppoſing her couſin's abſence would be ſhort, ſuffered her companion to lead her to the ſeat, and they both ſat down amidſt the incenſe of flowers, and the pleaſing warbling of birds.

"'Twas thus my dear Ellen, ſaid Fitz Aubin, with a ſigh half ſuppreſſed, we uſed to enjoy the beauties of a fine evening, when fortune wore a more ſmiling aſpect."

A reflection ſo intereſting and unexpected, cauſed an involuntary tear to ruſh into her eyes; however, recollecting herſelf, ſhe replied,—"We are now my good Henry, to conſider ourſelves, as called to forget the puerile amuſements of our infant years, for the more ſerious conſiderations of riper age."

"Ah, Ellen! are we not more unjuſt to ourſelves than we ſometimes ſuſpect?—what

are

are thoſe ſerious conſiderations, as we deem them, but oftentimes the mere ſlavery of prejudices, to which we meanly yield our reaſon and our happineſs?—Are not we at this inſtant, ignobly ſacrificing to the ſame tyranny?—ah then! reflect,—theſe precious moments are yet our own."

"Good heavens, exclaimed, ſhe trembling, what do I hear?"

"Let us, continued he, ſeizing her reluctant hand, exert our reaſon, and the unalienable right of free will, which is our birth right;—would my father's prejudices allow him to part with an encumbered eſtate, there could remain no obſtacle to our felicity; and is it prejudice then, rather than reaſon which muſt direct our deſtiny?—Oh wretched puſillanimity!"

"Say not another ſyllable, Fitz Aubin, if you wiſh me not to deſpiſe you."

"You

"You are deceived my Ellen,—a chimerical idea of honour deludes you,—truſt me we are wrong, in thus tamely yielding our wiſhes, to the culpable paſſions of others;—we may yet be bleſt, would you deſcend from the viſionary height, to which a too refined imagination carries you;—my father has it in his power to redreſs the misfortunes of the family, and we my Ellen, may be happy in that competency, which is ever the attendant on virtuous induſtry.—Oh, then! if you have not baniſhed every tender thought of your Henry from your boſom, conſent to ſhare his fortunes."

Miſs Ruſhford was ſoftened,—her eyes declared it, and her yielding heart ruſhed back to all its loved ideas, as water forcibly repreſſed, flows to rejoin its former channel;—he ſaw her emotions, and earneſt to improve the favourable moment, flung himſelf on his knees before her.

"Speak, he reſumed, my beloved Ellen, conſent

conſent to our immediate union, and let us put it beyond the power of caprice to divide us more,—believe me,—this reſolution once effected, we ſhall behold our anxieties remove, like clouds before the morning ſun, and one clear beam of felicity, will ſhine on our future days."

"Oh, flattering idea! ſhe exclaimed, in a voice expreſſive of the tendereſt emotion; on which, riſing with an extatic motion, "Then am I bleſt, he reſumed, this day repays me all I have ſuffered;—to-morrow we will be indiſſolubly one."

"Impoſſible, ſhe cried, what have you uttered?—oh, never! never! can it be."

"You love me then no longer, inconſtant Ellen,—where are now the tender ſentiments you once avowed,—too plainly I perceive, that Fitz Aubin ſtripped of the blandiſhments of fortune, can have no merit in his Ellen's eyes."

This

This ſevere reflection, was more than ſhe could bear,—her heart, before oppreſſed by ſome of the tendereſt ſtruggles nature e'er endured, could hold no longer,—ſhe fainted in his arms,—Mrs. Burton re-entered the garden, and beheld him claſping her lifeleſs form, with a look of inſanity.

"I will never leave her, cried he, forbear Madam to diſengage my hold, no power on earth ſhall divide us."

Amazed at ſo unexpected a ſcene, ſhe ſtood ſome moments bereft of recollection,—at length ſhe called ſome of her people, and Miſs Ruſhford in ſpite of his reſiſtance, was borne to her chamber,—he then ran wildly into the parlour, and flung himſelf on a ſofa. —Mrs. Burton undeſcribably diſtreſſed, knew not where to offer aſſiſtance firſt,—at length ſhe went up ſtairs, where ſhe ſaw the unhappy young lady, diſſolved in a flood of tears; —diſmiſſing the attendants, ſhe approached her, and in a voice of ſympathy, ſaid:

"For

"For pity's ſake, my ſweet girl, tell me what has happened to occaſion this unexpected diſorder,—Fitz Aubin abſolutely raves,—and you are not, I fear, in a much better condition."

"Oh, Madam, returned Miſs Ruſhford, let me hide myſelf if poſſible from you for ever."

"What are you ſaying my beſt love,—ſpeak and tell me all."

She immediately obeyed, by relating the converſation, which had juſt paſſed in the garden, not attempting to palliate that weakneſs in herſelf, which now ſhe looked on as culpable and mean, in the higheſt degree.

"Sweet ingenuouſneſs, cried Mrs. Burton, I had almoſt ſaid amiable weakneſs,—be aſſured this lapſe endears you to my heart, ſince there can be no merit in encountering an evil, which does not ſenſibly affect us;

us;—be compoſed, nor accuſe yourſelf with ſuch ſeverity, for an event which cannot but exalt you ſtill higher, in the eſteem of every feeling perſon,—poor Fitz Aubin my heart bleeds for him,—I will ſtep down to him, and endeavour to ſooth his mind."

"Do ſo, Madam,—but let him know alſo, we muſt ſee each other no more."

"Is ſuch your fixed determination, Ellen?"

"It is unalterably ſo,—ſoften the meſſage in pity to the feelings of a worthy heart,—but let him underſtand the reſolution I have formed muſt be final."

Mrs. Burton went down ſtairs, weeping as ſhe approached the parlour door, but Fitz Aubin was not there,—he had quitted the houſe, and on the table left the following billet for Miſs Ruſhford.

ELLEN,

"I have offended againſt you and honour,—but wonder not that a heart, not abſolutely dead to virtue, ſhould at times appear ſo unequal to itſelf;—I anticipate the ſentence I have incurred from you, and I meet it by baniſhing myſelf from your ſight for ever.—This inſtant I will ſet off for Ireland,—but how ſhall I utter my laſt adieu.—Oh, all that is lovely,—all that is deſirable to my ſoul!—farewell for ever.—Be you bleſt in your union with the Captain, who will make you happy.—Think that I have deſerved your love, when you ſhall be told of the ſacrifice I ſhall make, in acquieſcence with your will.—To know that you are happy, will, more than any other conſideration on earth, promote the eaſe of

FITZ AUBIN.

On ſuch a criſis as the preſent, there was only one ſtep that reaſon pointed out, and that one Mrs. Burton failed not to urge;—Miſs Ruſhford's immediate marriage with the

the Captain;—Conſcious of her own weakneſs, and dreading ſtill more the impetuoſity of Fitz Aubin's paſſion, Ellen herſelf acknowledged the propriety of the meaſure;—and a month from that day was fixed, for the ſolemnization of the ceremony.

CHAP. XIII.

IN this ſituation we muſt now leave affairs at Richmond, and accompany Henry Fitz Aubin back to his native kingdom, where his preſence was eſpecially neceſſary to relieve a beloved ſiſter, from the thouſand apprehenſions ſhe had undergone on his account; but what words can expreſs her ſatisfaction, when ſhe diſcovered in his countenance, the marks of a compoſed mind, and heard him declare, he had now brought himſelf to reſign to the fate, which had been decreed him.—In the midſt of their converſation Mrs. Fitz

Fitz Aubin entered, and ſurveying the young gentleman with ineffable malignancy, ſaid:

"Your father, ſir, has heard of your arrival, and requeſted me to inform you, that your entire abſence from this family, will be agreeable to him."

"When I ſhall be ſo unhappy, as to hear that ſentence from my father's lips, returned he, I ſhall be prepared to obey."

"Your preſence ſhall no more diſturb your father's peace, young gentleman, I aſſure you."

"And who dares preſume, Madam, to oppoſe it," anſwered he; at the ſame time ruſhed violently by her, and proceeded to his father's apartment.

Henrietta could no longer repreſs her indignation, but breaking the reſtraint, which ſhe had hitherto put on herſelf, ſhe boldly chal-

lenged that invidious woman, with having alienated a father's affections from his children, and by a ſeries of extravagancies, brought his affairs to the preſent wretched criſis, which demanded as a remedy nothing leſs than the ſacrifice of a ſon, who nature deſigned as the pride and ornament of the family: "But now, continued ſhe, weeping, deſpondency and miſery muſt cloud the hours of his future life."

During this altercation the firſt indeed of the kind, which Miſs Fitz Aubin's guarded conduct had permitted to happen, Henry attained his father's apartment, and was in an inſtant at his feet,—"Now ſir, cried he, I at length preſent myſelf before you, as the ſubmiſſive victim of filial duty;—the ſtruggle between duty, and the tendereſt of all paſſions is over, —I am yours, to be diſpoſed of as you ſhall deem for the benefit of the family."

"You are ſtill then my ſon, exclaimed the old gentleman, with a mixture of ſurpriſe and

and pleaſure, and indeed I doubted not, but you would be again yourſelf, when releaſed from the ſociety of that moſt dangerous girl."

"If you intend Miſs Ruſhford, ſir, by that unkind epithet, I muſt inform you, that the whole of what you call my releaſe, is owing to her alone;—to her ſuperior virtue,—to her inimitable example, you my father are indebted for the ſucceſs of your wiſhes."

"Is that true Henry?—then indeed I have injured her."—

"My father, left to the ſuggeſtions of his *own* heart, could not have injured any one."

"Say no more,—ſay no more, Harry,—but let us rather deviſe the readieſt mode of proceeding in this painful buſineſs."

Notwithſtanding the coolneſs, which had for ſome time ſubſiſted between this family and that of Lord Langby, it was not thought

impracticable to revive the former negociation, the lady's paſſion for Fitz Aubin, not being ſuppoſed of the moſt delicate nature.—In fine, his overtures tho' not of the moſt ardent kind, met with a very welcome reception, and all was peace and good humour once more.—Miſs Langby's exceſſive vanity readily led her to imagine, that her attractions had triumphed over thoſe of her late rival, for ſhe no ſooner underſtood Fitz Aubin's deſign, of paying his devoirs to her, than ſelf-flattery immediately ſuggeſted, that for her ſake he had left Miſs Ruſhford, to mourn the inconſtancy of his affections;—the triumph indeed, would have been ignoble had it been real, however, the fond conceit happily relieved the lover, from the neceſſity of acting a very ſtrenuous part on the occaſion, as ſhe more than met his addreſſes half way.—An affection ſo ardent, as this lady on every occaſion diſcovered for him, muſt have excited ſomething like gratitude, in a leſs generous boſom than was that of Fitz Aubin;—he certainly thought it deſerving of the moſt

moſt grateful return he could make, tho' he felt its effects ſometimes a little inconvenient; the ſmalleſt abſence of mind, and of this we muſt confeſs, he was not totally guiltleſs, was ſufficient to excite her ſevere upbraiding, and if he chanced at any time, to exceed the hour of an appointed viſit, ſhe never failed diſpatching a footman or two, to accelerate his approach.

In this rapid approach to the land of matrimony, were paſſed the firſt ſix weeks of courtſhip, greatly to the ſatisfaction of Lord Langby and Mr. Fitz Aubin, but not ſo of Henrietta,—ſhe too well knew the feelings of her brother's ſoul, to be capable of participating in the ſatisfaction of the two families; the character of Miſs Langby, became every day more diſpleaſing to her;—her folly was contemptible, and her exceſſive fondneſs indelicate and diſguſting;—theſe ſentiments however, ſhe carefully concealed from her brother, tho' they often excited her to weep bitterly, when alone, over the unpropitious

fate which awaited him.—About this time an event, particularly adapted to enliven the gloomy ſenſations of his feeling heart, moſt ſeaſonably occured, by the arrival of a young gentleman, with whom he had been in habits of the ſtricteſt intimacy, during his reſidence at Oxford, and with whom he had ſince maintained an intimate correſpondence by letter.

Sir Robert Somers, (ſo was the gentleman called) was then about ſix and twenty; within the laſt twelvemonths, he had ſucceeded to the title and large eſtates of the Baronet, his father, and was in reality one of the worthieſt men in the world;—his figure was elegant, and his countenance ſo peculiarly expreſſive, as to induce even an ordinary phiſiognomiſt, to pronounce him poſſeſſed both of an excellent heart, and a cultivated underſtanding:—a character which he certainly deſerved in an eminent degree.—The ſociety of ſuch a perſon, was at this time particularly agreeable to the Fitz Aubin family.—Henry had now a companion of his own ſex, to whom he could,

without reſerve, impart thoſe feelings, which became leſs painful, by being participated by a judicious and intelligent friend, in the rectitude of whoſe principles alſo he found a ſtimulus for his own;—nor was the amiable Henrietta, without her ſhare of advantage, by the acquiſition of Sir Robert's ſociety;—the vivacity of his temper, and elegance of his manners, rendered his converſation extremely eſtimable, during many hours which ſhe was uſed to paſs alone, when her brother's preſence was indiſpenſible at Langby Caſtle, and a prolific ſubject for converſation, was always at hand to entertain them.—

The intimacy ſubſiſting between Sir Robert and Fitz Aubin, had given the former a clear idea of the affairs of the family;—with Miſs Ruſhford's character he was well acquainted, and always expreſſed himſelf, in terms of high admiration on that topic, tenderly lamenting the fatal neceſſity, which forbade the union of two perſons ſo ſingularly formed for each other.—By this time, Hen-

rietta had received intelligence, that Ellen had given her hand to Captain Faulkner; ſhe had much to ſay on the ſubject, and Sir Robert was the only perſon, ſhe could freely ſpeak with on the occaſion, for which reaſon, his converſation inſenſibly became more intereſting to her, than ſhe herſelf was aware of.—" I have no doubt, ſaid he, my dear Madam, but that your fair friend will ſecure to herſelf, a tolerable degree of happineſs, by the exertion of the ſame magnanimity, which has on a late occaſion ſo admirably diſtinguiſhed her,—your brother ſpeaks highly of Captain Faulkner, and I therefore truſt, that the lenient hand of time, will eſtabliſh the exalted woman, in that kind of rational felicity, which her virtues qualify her to enjoy.—I wiſh my views were leſs cloudy in another quarter."

" I underſtand you, ſaid Henrietta ſighing, indeed my heart forbodes a gloomy perſpective,—but, Sir Robert, I have wiſhed much to learn your opinion of my unfortunate brother's—choice I cannot call it.—

"Wife elect, then Madam, cried he; I believe I need not ſay, that ſhe is not the perſon to render my friend happy,—however, I rely ſo much on his good ſenſe, and the excellent principles I know him endowed with, as to hope he will not feel himſelf exceſſively wretched.—Miſs Langby appears a lady of ſo little ſenſibility, that I fancy if he leave her in quiet poſſeſſion of her humour, ſhe will trouble herſelf but little with his."

"Ah, my poor brother! burſting into tears, what a ſituation, for one of your exquiſite ſenſibility."

It is certain that the tears, Miſs Fitz Aubin ſhed on this occaſion, became her in the young Baronet's eye, far better than any gaudy ornament could have done.—The feeling part ſhe took in her brother's intereſts, but eſpecially the idea, which ſhe had tacitly expreſſed of matrimonial happineſs, gave him an elevated opinion of the excellence of her mind.—Theſe kind of tête-à-

têtes were pretty frequent, during the firſt part of Sir Robert's viſit, but by degrees they became leſs ſo.—Miſs Langby, perhaps, convinced of an impropriety, appeared not ſo ſolicitous to engroſs the whole of Fitz Aubin's company,—ſhe frequently propoſed parties of pleaſure, in which the two families partook, and the Baronet was particularly honoured with her attention.

It muſt be allowed that Sir Robert's heart being yet free from care, there was a liveli-neſs in his manner, which Fitz Aubin poſſeſſ-ed not, tho' formerly one of the moſt cheerful companions. Miſs Langby was evidently pleaſed with it, and at length, diſcovered a diſſatisfaction, whenever her lover made his viſits at the Caſtle, without him,—on ſuch occaſions ſhe would appear peeviſh and dull, —and his aſſiduities were received with neg-lect, but whenever Sir Robert appeared, ſhe aſſumed all her characteriſtic flippancy.

"If I were diſpoſed to be jealous, ſaid Fitz

Fitz Aubin to him, ſmiling, I ſhould actually ſet you down for my rival."

"What mean you, Harry?"

"You are ſurely very dull, if you do not comprehend; however I promiſe to forgive you, if you ſhould rob me of my fair miſtreſs's regard."

"Oh, ho!—are you thereabouts, my friend!—I am glad however to ſee this, for according to the old proverb, where there is jealouſy there is love.—Upon my honour, this is better than I expected to find matters between you."

"You totally miſtake Sir Robert, if you ſuſpect me of jealouſy in this caſe,—Miſs Langby's preference of you is apparent, and I am convinced it will be your own fault, if you do not ſucceed with her."—

"Miſs Langby!—would you have me offer my addreſſes to her?"

"Yes,—provided you like her, as well as I am convinced ſhe does you."

"Thou art actually jealous, Harry;—however to confeſs a ſecret, I am fixed elſewhere,—and perhaps may have occaſion for your good offices."

"Theſe you know you may at all times claim, tho' I cannot conjecture how they could be of ſervice, on ſuch an occaſion."

"Then I will tell you,—by your anſwering one queſtion I now put,—are the affections of the charming Henrietta diſengaged?"

"I believe I may anſwer in the negative,—but what,—Sir Robert,—do you reflect you are ſpeaking of my ſiſter?"

"To be ſure I do,—therefore you may ſuppoſe me ſerious,—in a word I adore her, and do now deſire your permiſſion to tell her ſo."

"By no means,—I have acquainted you with the deranged ſtate of our finances,—is it then neceſſary to ſay, that Henrietta has not a ſhilling to her portion,—ſurely then"—

"I would marry her without one, interrupted he, and think myſelf bleſt into the bargain,—but we will ſpeak farther on this ſubject in the evening,—allow me to meet you for that purpoſe, in your library.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

THE appointment being punctually obſer ved by both parties, a conferrence enſued entirely to their mutual ſatisfaction.—The idea of ſeeing a beloved ſiſter united to the friend of his heart, a man whoſe merit was univerſally eſteemed, could not but prove extremely delightful to Fitz Aubin, and he heſitated not to aſſure him, that provided his ſiſter favoured the propoſal, (of which he could have no doubt) there was every reaſon to ſuppoſe, her father would conſider it in too advantageous a light to be rejected.

Animated by the kind encouragement of his friend, Sir Robert was not long before he found a favourable opportunity of opening his heart to the young lady herſelf, in whoſe candid boſom he already poſſeſſed a powerful advocate;—ſhe was ſenſible of his worth, and tho' from the diſparity of fortune, durſt not indulge any flattering proſpects on that ſcore, yet could not avoid a ſecret wiſh that her character, might appear as eſtimable in his eyes, as he certainly did in her's.

Such being the caſe, we may conclude the Baronet did not long remain in ſuſpenſe, as to the tender point on which his heart was engaged.—Mr. Fitz Aubin, as Henry had reaſonably conjectured, embraced Sir Robert's generous propoſals with rapture,—ſuch a match for his daughter was certainly far beyond what he could ever have expected; for tho' Henrietta, both with reſpect to perſonal, and mental endowments, might juſtly have claimed precedency of almoſt her whole ſex, yet he could ſcarcely flatter himſelf, with the

hope

hope of matching her agreeable to his taſte, as he was utterly incapable of beſtowing with her any portion of that needful commodity, which the generality of faſhionable youths, have uſually no ſmall occaſion for.—A Baronet poſſeſſed of a clear ſix thouſand a year, of a character perfectly unexceptionable to become his ſon-in-law, was a moſt flattering circumſtance, and he now had a very rational proſpect of ſeeing both his children, within a ſhort time, moſt advantageouſly diſpoſed of in marriage; after which he imagined he might paſs the remainder of his days, in happy ſerenity, without any other care on his hands, than the providing for the children he had, and might have by the ſecond marriage, for as to William and Charles, he looked on their fortunes as effectually made, as ſoon as Henry ſhould have eſpouſed the daughter of Lord Langby;—for which event affairs were perfectly in train, the writings were already drawn, and an early day agreed on for them to be executed, according to the formalities of law.

Mr.

Mr. Fitz Aubin's health had ſurpriſingly mended, ſince affairs had taken ſo favourable a turn,—he had not however yet quitted his chamber; but the day at length arriving, on which he was to meet Lord Langby, for the above purpoſe, he would on no account allow it to be poſtponed, and therefore ſuffering himſelf to be ſupported to his chaiſe, was conveyed to the Caſtle.—But here the reception he met with was widely different, from what he had room to have expected.

"I believe, neighbour, ſaid his Lordſhip, with ſome confuſion, you and I have no buſineſs on our hands at preſent.—My daughter ſeems in no haſte, to have this matrimonial buſineſs concluded."—

"You recollect my lord, extremely ſurpriſed, that ſo early a day was fixed, entirely at your Lordſhip's motion."—

"Yes, yes,—but women you know are changeable,—I am heartily ſorry for the diſ-

ap-

appointment, and the rather as the match was not ſo much my choice, as that of my daughter's, whoſe inclinations I ever made it a point to indulge."

"My ſon then, muſt certainly have been guilty of ſome egregious impropriety, to induce the lady ſo ſuddenly to alter her intentions."

"In that reſpect, I am as much in the dark as you can be;—but I need not tell you how exceſſively, I have indulged every whim of her heart, and 'tis this very thing, I believe has ſpoiled the girl,—ſhe hardly knows her own mind two hours together,—but ſhe ſhall come and make her own apology, for in truth, I feel myſelf very awkwardly circumſtanced."

His Lordſhip here rang the bell, and ordered a footman to requeſt Miſs Langby's preſence,—ſhe immediately appeared, and with a tolerable ſhare of effrontery, conſidering the occaſion.

"I am

"I am ſo greatly aſtoniſhed Madam, ſaid Mr. Fitz Aubin, at what my Lord has intimated to me, as ſcarcely to rely on my ſenſes;—I hope and truſt, this breach between you and my ſon, will not be a final one, after what has paſſed?"

"As to that, ſir, anſwered ſhe with coolneſs, I cannot ſay,—it is ſufficient for me to tell you, that at preſent I have thought better of the affair."

"Aſtoniſhing!—however, Madam, you will be ſo good as to oblige me, with the reaſons for ſuch a conduct,—if my ſon have behaved improperly?"

"Why could you poſſibly believe that a woman of ſpirit, would take up with another woman's leavings, was not your ſon engaged to Ellen Ruſhford?"

"Did you know nothing of that circumſtance till now, Miſs Langby?"

"I can't

"I can't ſay, but I had heard of it."

"You muſt then have underſtood, that ſuch an engagement ſubſiſted no longer,—beſides, Madam, do you not know that Miſs Ruſhford is actually married?"

"I think he told me as much, ſome little time ſince."

"Then Madam, how is it poſſible, any obſtacle can exiſt on that account?"

"No matter,—I tell you ſir, I do not chuſe to marry your ſon, and my papa here has been ſo good as to indulge me in the refuſal."

"But at the ſame time, you know, Betſey, ſaid his Lordſhip, I remonſtrated to you on the unhandſomeneſs of ſuch a behaviour,—and I muſt ſay, had you a father of a different character, you would ſcarcely have been ſuffered to act ſo capriciouſly."

"La,

"La, now,—would you force a woman to marry, whether ſhe liked it or not?"

"By no means, cried Mr. Fitz Aubin, the affair is at an end, Madam,—I only wiſh for my ſon's ſake, and indeed for yours alſo, that you had been acquainted with your own mind before;—and I own I cannot help wiſhing, you may acquire more generoſity and honour, than ever in future to trifle with the feelings of a worthy heart."

Then immediately riſing the old gentleman quitted the room, with an air of ineffable diſdain;—he was no ſooner got home, than the houſe rang with his execrations;—he curſed the caprice of women,—aſcribed to them all the miſeries which fill the world,—execrated the day of his own birth;—in ſhort, both ſpoke and acted like a perſon in the paroxyſms of madneſs.—Sir Robert and Fitz Aubin had rode out,—there being conſequently no one at home, of whom he could be ſuppoſed to ſtand in any degree of awe, he was left to

give full ſcope to his paſſion, which he did with little abatement, for nearly a couple of hours;—at the expiration of that time Henrietta ventured to approach him, for Mrs. Fitz Aubin judged it prudent to keep herſelf out of ſight, during the operation of ſo violent a fit of ill humour, as of late he had not been ſparing of reproach to her on ſuch occaſions.—Being by this time ſomewhat calm, he acquainted his daughter with the unexpected eclairciſſement, which had taken place at the Caſtle;—on which, wringing her hands with inexpreſſible agony, ſhe cried:

"And Ellen Ruſhford is married,—Oh, moſt ill fated of mankind!"

The exclamation extorted by a keen ſenſe of her brother's ſufferings, had nearly coſt her dear,—for ſtung by remorſe, for the part he acted in that tender affair, and aggravated almoſt to madneſs by the reflection, that all his hopes of advantage thereby, were now proved illuſive, Mr. Fitz Aubin angrily ſeized his cane,

cane, and aimed it fiercely at her head,—but ſhe fortunately eſcaped the blow, by a timely precipitate retreat from his preſence.

When the two young gentlemen returned, he ſent for them to his apartment,—they found him weeping, for the violence of his paſſion had by this time ſubſided, into an extreme, not unuſual with perſons of this character;—fear, remorſe and ſelf reproach, contributed to extort from his eyes a flood of tears.

"I am aſhamed to be ſeen thus, cried he, but the curſed caprice of a flirt, has ſo ſenſibly degraded me, that I appear contemptible even in my own ſight, what then muſt I do in yours, Sir Robert,—to you my injured boy, I can have nothing to ſay."

He then briefly related the occurrence of the morning,—railed at himſelf and all the world, and even deigned to aſk forgiveneſs of his ſon, for the injudicious part he had acted, who could not without pain witneſs a

father's humiliation; and feeling himſelf too much oppreſſed to reply, the Baronet anſwered for him,—"I fancy, ſir, you will have no difficulty in prevailing on my friend, to bear this diſappointment with tolerable philoſophy, with reſpect to himſelf alone,—your ſituation indeed merits much conſideration,—it may not yet be hopeleſs,—ſomething may be done."—

With theſe inconcluſive ſentiments Sir Robert left the room, ſomewhat abruptly,—but it was in order to obtain, a private converſation with Miſs Fitz Aubin;—he pathetically painted to her the alarming criſis of family affairs, and then generouſly propoſed to ſtep forward to the relief of them, which his handſome fortune abundantly enabled him to do;—"I have been no ſpendthriſt, my deareſt Henrietta, ſaid he, and therefore have always been enabled, to have by me a conſiderable ſum of ready money, for the ſervice of my friends,—this I would already have tendered to your good father, had I not been

been well aware of the impropriety of ſuch a meaſure, and that his delicacy would have been ſhocked, at ſuch a propoſal in the preſent circumſtances;—now, had I a family right to make ſuch an offer of my ſervices."—

Here he pauſed, and looked with tender earneſtneſs at Henrietta, who clearly comprehending his meaning, looked down and bluſhed.—" Is it poſſible, reſumed he, that a regard to mere unmeaning punctilio, ſhould prevent my Henrietta from ſtepping forward to her father's relief,—will ſhe not then conſent to place me in that endeared relation, which will unite my intereſt to that of her whole family."

In fine Sir Robert ſo effectually wrought on the ſenſibility of that amiable girl, that before they parted ſhe had given a tacit conſent, to as much ſpeed in the nuptial preparations, as himſelf, her father and brother ſhould agree on.—The ſettlements he propoſed

poſed to make, were ſuch as the old gentleman could not have diſapproved, even had he really been capable of beſtowing a handſome fortune with his daughter, and could any thing have excited the ſenſation of joy in the boſom of Henry, it would have been the good fortune, which now awaited his beloved ſiſter.—In ſhort the day was fixed for the ceremony, which however an accident, not greatly to the regret of any body, delay'd for ſome time longer.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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